



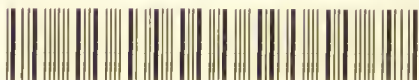


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A
PRACTICAL TREATISE
ON THE
CHOICE AND COOKERY
OF
F I S H.

BY PISCATOR.

i.e. William Hughes

SECOND EDITION.

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THE
CHOICE AND COOKERY
OF
FISH.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE object of the present work is to supply instructions upon the choice and cookery of fish; a subject hitherto only partially treated upon by the many talented authors on the general art of cookery. Even in the very best of these books a great number of our most common and useful fishes are omitted altogether; whilst others are slightly glossed over, little being said about the edible merits, or by what particular mode of cookery they may be turned to the most profitable advantage. As a proof of this, in six modern cookery works of the highest merit, we have searched in vain for something about the qua-

lities of the John Dory, which, although one of the best fishes the sea has produced, is altogether unnoticed; nor can we find the ling,—a very common, and yet one of the most useful fishes taken upon our coasts,—spoken of otherwise than as a dried salt fish; whilst no kind of fish whatever is capable of being dressed in a greater variety of ways, and few are equal to it in every one of them. The red and the grey mullet, two fish as different from each other, as far as cookery is concerned, as any two kinds can possibly be, we find jumbled together in a very strange manner, as if both were of the same species; the only difference mentioned between them being, that the red are better than the grey; whereas in point of fact they differ so widely from each other in every essential particular, that no mode of cookery adapted to the one can be applied to the other without spoiling it outright.

But it is not our intention to find any further fault with our talented writers on the art of cookery for their omissions in the fish department, in which, as far as they have gone, the subject has been so well treated, that our regret is that more has not been said upon it. This we hope in some measure to supply, and at the same time to point out how a valuable article of food, the importance of which does not seem to be suffi-

the most esteemed. Great numbers of large cod are, however, caught on the Devonshire and Cornish coasts, with which the fishmarkets of the seaport towns are plentifully supplied; but these fish do not often attain their highest state of perfection on the latter coast, as not one out of ten of those commonly exposed for sale can be considered in tolerable order, and not one in fifty in first-rate condition.

There are two varieties of these fish, which may be distinguished from each other by the one having a long, sharp nose, extending to some distance beyond the eyes; the nose of the other variety being blunt and wide. The former is usually found to be of a darker east than the latter, although the colour in all these fishes, and in fact in most others, is found to vary according to the nature of the food upon which they subsist, and the kind of bottom they inhabit; most fishes possessing the chameleon-like property of changing their tints, and acquiring those of the soil they usually swim over; which assists them to conceal themselves from the sight of numerous foes to whose attacks they are constantly liable, and to which a strong contrast in colour would constantly expose them. Hence it is that on rocky ground cod are often taken of a dark brown tint, resembling that of the ore-weed at the

bottom, and even where the weeds acquire a reddish tint, the same hue is also imparted to the fishes inhabiting them. The prevailing colour of those codfish that are met with in clean ground is an ashy green cast above, the lower parts being white; but in some the upper parts are of so pale a tint as to be nearly white, where these fish constantly inhabit a light-coloured sandy ground.

The codfish attains to a large size, instances having occurred of their weighing as much as sixty pounds, and Pennant speaks of one taken on the Yorkshire coast, that weighed as much as seventy-eight pounds; but about twenty-five pounds may be considered as the usual average of an adult codfish. Until these fish attain a pound weight they are termed codlings, and from that size to ten pounds weight they are called tamlin cod, and when they exceed the latter weight, then they become entitled to be styled codfish.

The large cod, if in good order, are generally the best flavoured fish, the smaller ones being less firm; and the smaller the fish, to the greater extent does this want of firmness prevail. The best way to counteract this defect is to sprinkle the fish with salt a day or two before it is dressed.

As a general rule, the cod is a winter fish, coming into season in October and going out in February; its highest condition being about

ciently appreciated, may be turned to the most advantageous account. It is really a subject worthy of some attention in a country like our own, where the consumption of provisions of every kind is so great as to render us in some degree dependent upon foreign countries, not only for the luxuries, but even some of the most common and essential necessities of life, and where consequently every available article of food we can obtain from our own resources ought to be made the most of; notwithstanding which, by some woeful mismanagement, many tons of fish, instead of being used as food, are frequently cast away to rot upon a dunghill, or carted away for manure, that, if properly distributed, might have relieved the wants, not only of hundreds, but even of thousands of our needy fellow-creatures.

This great evil formerly arose from the vast expense incurred and time occupied in carrying fish to any great distance overland from the places where it was caught; which consequently placed the purchase of that article only within the reach of the more opulent classes of society, and these, even at the highest prices, could not always obtain it in a sound condition. These difficulties are now in great measure removed by means of railway communication, through the medium of which fish of all kinds, and in a healthy

state, may, at a trifling expense, be distributed throughout the whole length and breadth of the land, and thus afford all ranks and classes a valuable augmentation of the necessaries of life at a moderate price. In a national point of view, therefore, it is evident an increased consumption of this article of food must confer a great benefit on the whole kingdom; for not only would the people generally be better and more cheaply fed, but our fisheries, so important to the interests of this country, as affording the best nursery for our seamen, would be carried on far more extensively in proportion as the demand for their labours increased. For this the supply is ample; all that is wanting is a demand for the article, and a knowledge of how to apply it when obtained.

If the good qualities of many kind of fishes were better known, this desirable end would be very easily attained; but unfortunately many good and wholesome fishes are rejected merely from ignorance of their real value, or of the proper way of cooking them; and this occurs more frequently with the most common and cheapest kinds of fish, many of which are superior to those of a rarer kind, and which are consequently sold at a much higher price. Such has been remarkably exemplified in the instance of the hake, which, although so highly esteemed amongst the

Portuguese (but upon whose coast it does not appear to be plentiful), as to be styled a royal fish, fit for the food of kings, has been so slightly regarded at Plymouth, where it is abundant, that till very lately it was altogether rejected by the opulent classes, and unthankfully eaten by the poor, for no other cause, than the extreme cheapness and abundance of the commodity. Latterly, however, the merits of the hake have overcome this ill-founded prejudice, and it is now to be met with at the best tables, where we have had the gratification of seeing hake cutlets garnishing a splendid turbot, and even unanimously proclaimed to be the better fish of the two. Still, for all this, far greater quantities of hake are often brought into our markets than can possibly be consumed in a fresh state; the consequence is, that tons weight are frequently spoilt, and carried off by cartloads at a time for manure. The same also occurs with respect to rays, with which the markets in the southern parts of the west of England are often so glutted, that not one tenth part of them can find purchasers, even at the very lowest price; and yet when rays are prepared in the form of crimped skate, they are by no means a bad dish of fish, and in many places highly prized, when stewed is really delicious, and, what is still more, exceedingly wholesome and nutri-

tious; and yet, from the quantities of these fish, and the exceeding lowness of price at which they may be purchased, many of the very poorest people, and almost on the verge of starvation, will refuse to partake of them in any shape or form whatever. This, amongst numberless other instances we could mention, shows how desirable it is that the true qualities of all our fishes should be more generally known, as well as the criterions by which their sound and healthy condition may be most readily tested. The chief cause why fish is not a more favourite article of diet with many persons is, that they have chanced to partake of it when out of season, or tainted by decomposition, or spoilt by exceedingly bad cookery, and they have taken a disgust to it accordingly. A mackerel is a fine flavoured fish when perfectly fresh, and a very nauseous one when stale; and yet the latter is the condition in which most of these fish are commonly eaten by those who live at a distance from the places they are caught. The same remarks apply equally to many other kinds of fish, which, although excellent when dressed soon after they are taken, entirely lose their fine flavour a few hours afterwards, and, if kept much longer, become so insipid as to be altogether unpalatable, although free from any taint of decomposition; whilst others, as the whole of the ray

tribe for instance, so far from being at all damaged, are greatly improved by being kept a day or two before they are cooked. Again, there are some kinds of fish—as the whiting pollock, and tamlin eod—which are soft, watery, mawkish, and insipid, if boiled immediately after they are captured, but which by being powdered with salt a day or two before they are dressed, become both firm and well-flavoured, whilst with other fish, the same process produces an effect diametrically opposite; the salt extracting every kind of good flavour, and often imparting a strong disagreeable taste in its stead, which it almost invariably does, if used in any considerable quantity for the purpose of preserving soles, and most, if not every, other kind of flat fish.

The cleaning and preparing fish for the table also requires considerable care, and many good dish of fish is spoilt in consequence of inattention to this important matter.

It is also essential to know what particular mode of cooking is best adapted to each individual kind of fish; for, although some species are capable of being dressed in every variety of way that gastronomic ingenuity can suggest, and, if properly done, are good in every one of them, there are others that, although delicious if dressed in the mode to which they are espe-

ially adapted, are scarcely eatable if cooked in any other manner. Thus, if a grey mullet were to be dressed without being gutted or sealed in the way a red mullet is usually done, it would be unfit to be eaten; whilst a red mullet sealed and plain boiled, in the same manner the grey ought to be dressed, would prove one of the most insipid fishes that could be brought to table. A carp, everybody knows, when stewed, affords a splendid dish, but, when simply boiled, is one of the very worst fish that can be eaten. Chads also, which are the young of the sea bream, although very indifferent fish when prepared in most of the ordinary ways of cooking, may be so cooked, that inexperienced persons would not know them from surmullet; they are also exceedingly good marinated; in addition to which, by the aid of a little butter and spice, they may be potted, and rendered in every respect equal to the potted charr for which the lakes of Cumberland have been so long and justly celebrated.

With these few preliminary observations, we shall proceed at once with our subject. First, by offering such practical directions as may enable our readers to distinguish the different species of fish from each other, with remarks upon the respective merits of each individual

species; as also the time of year at which they are to be found in the most sound and healthy condition, and the criterions by which this sound and healthy condition can be most readily determined.

Our next attempt will be to point out the proper way of cleaning fish, and preparing them for cooking, as also the best ways of preserving them either for a short or a long period, as circumstances may require.

And, lastly, we shall afford all the information we can collect as to the various ways in which each individual species may be cooked, so as to appear at table to the greatest possible advantage; as also the way in which it should be served up and garnished, and the different saucers and gravies with which it ought to be accompanied; as also the various ways in which these gravies and saucers are to be prepared.

CHAP. II.

DIRECTIONS FOR CHOOSING FISH, WITH REMARKS UPON
THEIR RESPECTIVE QUALITIES.

SECTION I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

MOST persons entertain the notion that certain kinds of fish all come into good season at the same time of the year, without any important difference between the individual qualities of each; in fact, that when a particular sort of fish is said to be in season, the whole species are equally good; and, when out of season, all are bad in a like degree. Now this is most erroneous. It is true that in some months of the year the generality of fish of a particular kind are in better condition than at others; and at those periods the greater number will be found to be in the prime order. But at the same time it must be borne in mind, that fish vary as much from each other in the relative state of their goodness, as either cattle or poultry; so that, even in the most favourable periods of the year, many fish may always be met with in an unhealthy state, and of some par-

tiacular kinds, as we shall duly notice hereafter, it is rare, at any season of the year whatever, out of a quantity exposed for sale, to find one half of them in proper order for the table ; and sometimes not even one in twenty can be met with approaching even to tolerable condition, and this even at a time of the year when fish of the same kind are usually considered to be in proper season. This shows how necessary it is that every eaterer of a family should know how to choose fish as well as meat, poultry, vegetables, fruit, or any other article of food.

There is, indeed, little risk, for those who can afford to pay the price, of buying a fish much out of condition from a first-rate fishmonger, however the article may prove as far as freshness is concerned ; as this kind of tradesman makes it a rule never to purchase any but first-rate fish, but upon which, as he must get a large profit to afford a sufficient remuneration for the investment of capital in so perishable an article, the purchaser must expect to pay accordingly ; so that any one who is possessed of sufficient knowledge to select the article may usually obtain it at a great reduction of price in a public fishmarket, and generally in a much fresher state than he could obtain in the shop of a fashionable fishmonger. Still, those who know nothing of

the matter, if they want a really good dish of fish, would do wiser to deal with a respectable fishmonger, and pay him what he asks, than run the risk of what they may purchase in the public markets, or from those persons who hawk fish about the streets and through the country; for into such hands as the latter all the refuse fish is sure to come, which, of course, they strive to dispose of to their most ignorant customers, well knowing their wiser ones would decline to purchase so worthless a commodity. This is another strong argument that every one who attempts to purchase fish, should know something of the quality of the article; and more particularly so, as little difference is made in the price between the good and the bad; so that, upon being able to exercise a sound judgment will depend whether you have the best, or the worst kind of commodity, for precisely the same amount of money.

But it is not enough to be able to detect the healthy condition of a fish, or its state of freshness; for with some kinds it is essential to discover the particular manner in which they have been captured; as the way in which fish are taken sometimes spoils some delicate kinds outright, and others it impairs so considerably, that they are, or, at any rate, are supposed to be, sold

at a cheaper rate than those which have been caught by some less injurious mode. Thus, whittings, haddocks, bibs, and surmullet, being very tender and delicate fish, if caught in a trawl net, are rendered all but worthless, in consequence of the pressure they encounter amidst the crowd of other fish, and the weeds, seaweed, and rubbish with which they are jammed up in the trawl net. Cod, ling, hake, and pollock, when captured in the same manner, all become more or less injured, sometimes to such an extent as to render them valueless, whilst at others the damage is but trivial; still, however slight it may be, none of the last kind of fish caught in this way, are equal to those taken with a hook and line. Yet fish-vendors have never been known to cry stinking fish, or trawl-caught cod, hake, or whiting, which they usually strive, and often successfully, to pass off on every inexperienced purchaser as hook-and-line caught fish.

The difference between hook-and-line fish and one caught in a trawl, may, however, be very readily detected by any one who will attend to the rules we shall lay down in the following section, and which we trust will be duly attended to by all our readers who intend to make purchases in the fishmarket.

SECTION II.

FISHES OF THE COD KIND.

The cod tribe consists of no less than sixteen distinct species; namely, the common cod, speckled cod, haddock, bib, pouting, whiting, whiting pollock, rawlin pollock, hake, forked hake, four species of lings—the single bearded, three bearded, and five bearded; the burbot; and also the torsk and the tadpole fish. They are all good fish, and afford the most wholesome food the sea produces; being innocent and easy of digestion, and on this account are permitted to be eaten by invalids in preference to any other kind of fish whatever. But good and wholesome as all these fish undoubtedly are, great judgment is required in their selection, as a great many kinds are brought into the markets in very inferior condition, and, with the exception of whiting and whiting pollock, it is rare to find, amongst the different varieties of the cod tribe exposed for sale, one half of them in a fit condition for the table, and rarely, if ever, are one fourth part of them in first-rate order.

1. *The Common Cod.*

The codfish is taken on all parts of the British coast, but those caught on the Dogger-bank are

Christmas, at which time most of the females will be found in roe; and they continue good until very near the eve of depositing their spawn: but when this period approaches they become out of condition, and by the time it is finished they are thin and emaciated, and continue out of order for some months afterwards; yet, as it usually happens that some of these fishes cast their spawn many weeks earlier than others, the first begin to regain their condition before the last begin to fail, and thus some codfish may be found in tolerable order nearly all the year through.

And now for choosing a codfish. In doing this you must select one that rises high and is well filled out at the nape, having a deep pit just behind the head, the sides being broad and ribbed with elevated ridges; the flesh ought also to be stiff. If the fish has a tongue in its mouth it tells its high condition. A cod's tongue can never speak falsely in this respect, as it is never found in the mouth of one unless it is in first-rate order.

The freshness of the fish may be tested by the brightness of its eyes, the redness of the gills, and the clear moisture of the slime upon its body; although in a trawl-caught codfish the latter test is wanting, as the scales and slime being rubbed off in the net, the fish acquires the same dull, dry, and

stale appearance of a codfish that has been for some time captured; and it is from the scales being thus detached, and the dull, dry-looking aspect of the fish, that a trawl-caught codfish may be distinguished from one taken by a hook and line. The colour of the gills will, however, still afford a test of its freshness, which may also be determined by pressing the point of your finger hard enough upon the body of the fish to make an impression, which will remain if the fish be stale, but will rise again immediately on the removal of the pressure if it be perfectly fresh.

There is a smaller variety of cod called the variable or speckled cod, which is sometimes taken on our coasts, and which differs from the common codfish in having a smaller head, and by the lower jaw being considerably shorter than the upper one, as it also does in its external colouring, which is a greyish brown speckled over with yellow or pale drab spots. It is a smaller fish than the common cod, as it seldom exceeds seven or eight pounds weight; but if in good order is superior in flavour to a well-fed common codfish of the same size.

2. *The Haddock.*

The haddock bears some resemblance to the codfish, yet may easily be distinguished from it

by the black mark, sometimes a stripe, but more commonly a spot, on each shoulder, vulgarly believed to have been made by the finger and thumb of St. Peter when he took the tribute-money out of the mouth of this fish, and which, as a memorial of the miraele, has been continued to the whole race of haddocks down to the present day. Be this as it may, the haddock is an excellent fish; its flesh being firm and of a snow-white colour, with a creamy eurd between the flakes. It may be dressed either quite fresh or slightly powdered, and it eats agreeably enough when salted either in pickle or dried. The larger the fish the firmer it is, depending of eourse upon its health and condition; for these fish differ quite as much from each other in their eomparative goodness as the eodfish, and quite as many bad speeimens may be found amongst the one as the other, so that equal attention is neecessary in making a selection of either of these fishes.

To ehoose a haddock, pick out one, if you ean find any such, that is deep-bodied, thiek, and well filled out, rounded at the poll, and elevated on the back; for if sharp ridged, like the top of the roof of a house, and if the form of the fish is lanky and compressed, it is out of season. It should also be of a pale brown on the back, the sides being bright and silvery, the slime clear and transparent,

the scales undisturbed, and all the fins unruffled. If the scales are rubbed off, the body assumes a dull reddish tint, and if the rays of the fins, particularly the tail fin, are broken, and separate from the membrane, the fish has been caught in a trawl, and will be scarcely worth eating; as the pressure it encounters in the net squeezes up the liver and intestines, and imparts a strong and disagreeable taint to the whole fish. Redness of the gills and brightness of the eyes also afford a test of the freshness of this fish. When it is stale the gills turn to a dull cast, the sides grow dull, and the fish becomes limp. A haddock, like a codfish, ought to be perfectly stiff; but this does not always occur even in a perfectly fresh and healthy fish; still a fish that does not stiffen never flakes out well.

The largest haddocks, it seems, are found in Dublin Bay, and on the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall; on the latter of which they are sometimes taken weighing as much as fourteen pounds, and specimens of from eight to ten pounds may be constantly met with in the fish-markets along the southern line of coast of those counties; whilst from two to four pounds weight may be considered the common average of those fishes obtained by the London-markets from the other parts of our sea-coast.

The larger-sized haddocks keep better than the smaller ones; but those of all sizes are likely to acquire a rancid taint, from the oily quality of their livers, if permitted to remain too long after they are caught without being gutted; which process should never be unnecessarily delayed where circumstances will otherwise permit. Haddocks are delicious, either boiled or fried, but are of rather too dry a nature to eat so well when stewed as cod, ling, or hake; and, although salt tends to preserve them, we consider it extracts in some degree the delicate richness of their flavour; and, in our opinion, a haddock cannot be eaten too soon after it is caught.

Haddocks are a winter fish, being in best order from November to February, which is the spawning time; after which the larger ones become thin and out of season, at which times they betake themselves to very deep water, where they are not often captured; the smaller ones, that have not arrived at a spawning time of life, are in proper condition for the table at all times.

3. *The Bib.*

The bib is a firm, sweet-tasted fish. It is very common in our fish-markets, where it is usually sold at a very cheap rate. It averages from

about two pounds to half a pound weight. It is a fish that keeps badly, from the oily nature of its liver, which soon imparts a rancid flavour to the fish, but which may be entirely prevented by extracting the intestines within a few hours after it is caught; if this, however, be duly attended to, the fish will be found to possess a very agreeable flavour; the larger ones being delicious when boiled, and the smaller ones equally so when fried, provided they be done soon after they are caught; but they lose a great deal of the delicacy of their flavour when kept; and, though they may be preserved by being sprinkled with salt, it deprives them altogether of the fine taste they possess when perfectly fresh. From being so seldom partaken of in a state of perfection this fish does not bear so good a reputation as it really merits. Those caught in a trawl are rendered worthless, and may be detected by the dull aspect they acquire by being deprived of their scales.

In selecting a bib, see that the eyes and scales look bright, and the slime on the bodies clear and transparent; that the fish is well filled out, deep-bodied, high at the back, and thick behind the shoulders. Gut the fish as soon as possible, and cook it at the earliest opportunity.

This fish is known by a great variety of names ; at Southampton it is called a toup ; in many other places a whiting pout, or pouting ; in the west of England it is called a blin or blind ; at St. Ives it is known by the name of lug or leaf ; and at Penzance by the title of bothoek, which, we have been informed, in the ancient Cornish language, signifies large eyes, for which this fish is remarkable, as also for a membrane that covers them, which it has the power of distending like an air-bladder.

4. *The Pouting, or Power Codfish.*

The pouting is a smaller fish than the last ; seldom attaining to more than a quarter of a pound weight. It resembles a bib of the same size so much in its general appearance, that many persons who even see the two fishes side by side do not detect the difference ; but which is apparent enough to a practised eye, the pouting being of a more elongated form than the bib, and its scales much larger in proportion. The pouting, when eaten within a few hours after it is caught, is one of the most delicious-flavoured fish the sea produces ; but it keeps so very badly, that unless cooked on the very day it is caught it loses all the delicacy of its flavour, and, although perfectly untainted by decomposition, it becomes so

tasteless by the time it has been twenty-four hours out of water as to be scarcely worth eating. On this account, although swarms of these delicious fish may be taken daily in Plymouth Sound during the whole of the summer and autumn months, we have never seen one of them exposed for sale in the fish-markets of either Plymouth, Stonehouse, or Devonport, or, in fact, at any place offered for sale in any way. The only persons, therefore, who have the opportunities of enjoying them are the amateur fishermen and their friends; and, as the former often capture as many as ten or fifteen dozen of these fishes in the course of two or three hours, a sufficient supply can generally be relied on; and, when nicely fried on the same day, they afford as good a dish of fish as the most fastidious epicure could desire to partake of; but which, if the process were to be delayed until the following day, he would condemn as unfit to be eaten.

5. *Rawlin Pollock, Whiting Pollock, and Whiting.*

These three distinct species of fish have so great an external resemblance to each other, that casual observers often mistake the one for the other. The two former, however, are distinguishable from the whiting, not only by being

usually of a darker colour, but also in the formation of the jaws; the upper jaw of the whiting projecting beyond the lower one, whilst in both kinds of pollock the lower jaw projects beyond the upper one.

The difference between the two kinds of pollock may be detected by examining their lateral lines; that of the whiting pollock being of a dark colour and of a curved form, rising towards the middle of the back, and then sinking and running straight towards the tail; whilst in the rawlin pollock the line runs straight along the whole length of the body from gill to tail, and is of a silvery white. Both kinds of pollock attain a large size, the rawlin pollock sometimes reaching to forty pounds, the whiting pollock to as much as fourteen; but about half that size may be taken as the usual average of the adult fishes.

The rawlin pollock is not held in very high estimation, and has acquired a worse reputation than it deserves from being often met with out of season, as the larger fish usually are during the greater part of the summer months. The almost general rule, that "the larger the size the better the fish" is reversed in the rawlin pollock, the small ones being much the best flavoured.

In choosing one of these fish, you must see that it is thick about the poll, well rounded over

the back, and that it carries its fulness down to the very tail. The redness of the gills, brightness of the eyes, and elasticity of the flesh upon pressure afford the best proof of its freshness. The scales being rubbed off, and the fins broken, denote the fish to have been caught in a trawl; but it is liable to less injury when taken in this manner than most others of the cod tribe. It is a fish, also, that is improved by being salted before it is cooked, and makes an excellent salt fish. Indeed, Sir Richard Bonnycastle, in his account of the products of Newfoundland, considers this fish, when prepared in this manner, superior to the cod, for which that part of the world has been so long celebrated. The rawlin pollock is, however, preserved in a different manner from the codfish, being exported to this country pickled in barrels, the cod being sent over dried.

The whiting pollock is considered a better fish than the preceding; but this fish is much improved by being sprinkled with salt a day or two before it is cooked.

The criterions of goodness in a whiting pollock are the depth and fulness of the body; and its freshness is determined by the brightness of the eyes, the redness of the gills, and the clearness of the slime; but which soon dries up, even before

the fish gets in any way tainted, and often causes it to assume an untempting appearance before it becomes at all stale ; when this occurs, its freshness may be tested by pressure, in the manner we have already pointed out.

The rawlin pollock is known by various names, depending in a great measure upon its various stages of growth ; as eoal fish, sethe, grey lord, and blockin. The fry, when small, are called billets, coalsies, parrs, and podleys ; when above a foot long they are termed poodlers.

The whiting pollock sometimes, *par excellence*, is styled pollock only. On the Yorkshire coast it is called a leet, and in Scotland a lythe.

The whiting (or silver whiting as it is sometimes called, to distinguish it from the whiting and rawlin pollock), when in prime order, as it generally is during the greater part of the year, is one of the most wholesome and delicate fish the sea produces ; and, except during the spawning time, which occurs about January, may be considered in season all the year round. The largest whiting are caught on the southern coast of Devonshire and Cornwall ; but those taken on the northern coast of those two counties, although usually smaller in size, are superior in flavour. When perfectly fresh it is of a pale brown on the back, the sides silver and slightly mottled with

greyish brown, the belly white, the slime perfectly clear and transparent. As the fish grows stale the slime becomes thick, and imparts a dull appearance to the sides. When caught in a trawl, it assumes a dull, parboiled appearance, which is perceptible to the most unpractised eye; and, being a fish of a very tender nature, a trawl-caught whiting is not fit to be eaten, and should be rejected accordingly. If treated properly, whiting will keep well, and are rather improved than otherwise by being kept a day, or sprinkled with salt before they are used; but the intestines ought to be extracted as soon as possible after they are caught.

Those whittings which die stiff with their mouths wide open always flake out the best, and therefore should always be selected when the opportunity offers; but this does not always happen, as we have often noticed several dozens of these fish all perfectly fresh and in good season, and yet not a stiff fish amongst the whole batch.

6. *The Hake.*

The hake, although little esteemed, is one of the most valuable fishes with which it has pleased a bountiful Providence to bless mankind. They are found in great abundance, and may be cooked

in a great variety of ways. It is very good when boiled, either perfectly fresh, powdered slightly with salt, or cured; either pickled, or as a dried salt fish. Hake cutlets form as delicious a dish of fish as can possibly be produced; slightly powdered, it makes a first-rate broil; it is also good stewed, either whole with a pudding in its belly in the way a pike is done, or cut up in steaks; and is very nice either marinated or potted.

Hakes are in best order from about Michaelmas to Christmas; but towards the latter end of January, as they approach near the spawning time, they begin to fail; yet, unluckily, at these times they are taken in greatest numbers by the trawlers, whilst they remain in a weak and supine state at the bottom. This is much to be regretted, as at those times by far the greater portion of them are out of season, and consequently not in a proper state to be eaten; and this is the chief cause of the hake's undeserved unpopularity.

A hake, indeed, that is at any time caught with a trawl, is inferior to a hook-and-line fish, and the difference between the two may be detected by the scales being rubbed off, and the rays of the fins broken and detached from the membranes, which always occurs more or less in a trawl-caught hake. Yet, although the trawl always does some

degree of damage to these fish, it injures some much more than others ; yet often the damage is so trifling, that the fish need not be altogether rejected, particularly when a hook-and-line-caught hake in proper condition cannot be procured. If, therefore, the fish is well proportioned, and retains its stiffness, and the scales are only partially rubbed off, it may prove a very good fish ; but never purchase one that has not retained a considerable portion of its scales about the shoulders and forepart of the body.

In a hook-and-line hake the scales present an even and unbroken surface, the sides are bright and silvery, and the fins unbroken and unruffled. The proof of high condition consists in the stoutness of the body, the thickness of which should be carried well down towards the tail ; but the abdomen should not be too much rounded and swollen. The freshness is proved by the redness of the gills, the brightness of the eyes and scales, and the transparency of the slime.

7. *The Forked Hake.*

The forked hake resembles the species last described, but is of a stouter make. It is of much smaller size than the common hake, seldom exceeding two feet in length, and may be recognised by

possessing two very remarkable long, naked rays, forked at the extremity, and growing out from the throat about midway from the gape of the mouth and pectoral fin. This fish does not appear to be very plentiful; but may usually be met with in the Plymouth fish-market during the winter months. It is not, however, much esteemed. It resembles the hake, but is extremely inferior to it in flavour. The best way of dressing the forked hake is to split it open, and, powdering it with pepper and salt, to broil it over a clear fire, rubbing plenty of butter over it when done; in which way it will be found to eat very agreeably.

The same rules may be adopted for selecting this fish as the preceeding one.

8. *The Ling.*

The ling is a first-rate fish, both for size and goodness. It sometimes attains to as much as seventy pounds weight, and thirty pounds is by no means an extraordinary size; added to which, its flesh is firm, white, and of most exquisite flavour; it keeps remarkably well without the aid of salt or any other material for preserving it; though it takes the former very easily; and when cured as salt-fish is far superior to any other kind prepared in the same way. There is, however, a

great deal of difference in the relative goodness which these fish bear to each other, as even in the most favourable season of the year numbers of them may be found out of condition; and at others, perhaps not one in ten can be met with that is in first-rate order. It is necessary, therefore, that every one who purchases a ling should know how to make a proper selection; to do which the following rules should be carefully observed.

The fish must be stout and thick about the shoulders and forepart of the body, decreasing by gradual and imperceptible degrees towards the tail, the muscles being well filled up, and marked by small elevated ridges or furrows; the fish ought also to be perfectly stiff. The abdomen should not be too much rounded. If the fish has a large protuberant belly, and becomes suddenly compressed at the vent, and thin towards the tail, it is altogether out of season. An ill-conditioned ling never becomes stiff; but the reverse is not always the case, as ling caught in a trawl seldom stiffen well; and sometimes this happens with a ling in good season caught with a hook and line; but, whenever this occurs, the fish will not flake out so well as one that becomes perfectly stiff. Another unerring proof of the good or ill condition is the colour of the liver, which should be of an opaque, creamish

cast, approaching almost to whiteness, and the paler the colour is, the better is the condition of the fish. When out of order, the liver assumes a darker cast, until it acquires a reddish tint, which affords a sure indication that the fish is out of season. Its freshness may be tested in the same manner as in the codfish. Those fish which have been caught in a trawl-net may be distinguished from the others by having a dull look, and wanting the brightness of colouring displayed in a high-conditioned hook-and-line ling. This is caused by the slime having been rubbed off by the trawl-net. The latter mode of capture does not injure a ling so much as it does most other fishes of the eod tribe; but still a fish taken in this manner is not equal to one of the same kind caught with a hook and line.

The largest lings are the best flavoured, the smaller ones being deficient in that firmness which forms such an excellence in the adult fishes. Until a ling measures twenty-six inches or upwards from shoulder to tail it is called a drizzle, and is not allowed to rank as a sizeable fish; and when bounties were allowed by the government to fishermen upon the exportation of salted fish, drizzles were excluded from participating in them.

Like the eod, the ling has a remarkably fine

sound, which can be either dressed fresh with the fish, or salted; in which way the tongues of these fish, as also those of the cod, are prepared. The roes, both hard and soft, are also excellent. The greatest portion of what is called cod-liver oil, now so much used as medicine, is produced from the liver of this fish.

Ling is cooked in the same manner as cod; in addition to which, on account of its superior firmness, it is excellent cold and pickled, or soused in the way salmon and mackerel are done. It is also delicious potted in the manner we shall hereafter point out; an economical mode of turning cold fish, which is too often thrown away and wasted, to valuable account, at a cost that is next to nothing. Any cold portions which may be left also afford the best possible materials for fish sausages; for frying in batter; or covered with egg, cream, and crumbs; the preparation of all which will be duly treated of in its proper place.

9. *The Burbot.*

The burbot is the only member of the cod family that inhabits the fresh water. It is a moderate-sized fish, usually about two pounds weight, resembling a small ling in form, but, like the cel, covered over with a thick, mucous slime. It is said to be a delicious fish, resembling in

flavour, but superior to, the common fresh-water eel. It is not, however, a general fish in this country; being only met with in a few of our rivers, as the Severn, Trent, and Cam, and in some rivers in Yorkshire and Durham. It is also known by the names of burbolt and eel-pout.

10. *The Three-bearded Ling*

Is a moderate-sized fish, seldom exceeding the length of twelve or fourteen inches. It derives its name from possessing three barbs—two on the muzzle and one beneath the chin,—the common ling possessing only the latter. It is of a wider make than the common ling about the shoulders and forepart of the body, but becomes more compressed towards the tail. It differs also in colour, being curiously mottled with brown and red. It is a delicate fish, rather resembling a whiting than a ling in flavour; but it ought to be cooked very fresh, as it loses all its flavour, and becomes flabby and disagreeable, if kept for any time after it is taken. The best way to cook these fish is to split them open, and either fry or broil them. Their healthy condition and freshness may be tested in the same manner as the common ling. The fry, when not exceeding five or six inches in length, are of a uniform brown colour. These make a delicious fry if cooked on the same

day they are caught; but, if kept longer, they lose all their delicate flavour.

11. *The Five-bearded Ling.*

The five-bearded ling is a little fish of four or five inches in length, possessing no less than five beards; two at the end of the nose, two just before the eyes, and one beneath the chin. It is a dark-looking, ugly fish, but eats very agreeably if nicely fried.

12. *The Tadpole Fish.*

The tadpole fish is even more repulsive in its appearance than the one we have last mentioned; and, its wide and depressed head, stout shoulders, short and compressed body, combined with its dark colour, give it some resemblance to an overgrown specimen of the repulsive-looking reptile from which, there can be little doubt, it derives its name: still, in spite of appearances, it possesses a most exquisite flavour, as we can testify from our experience. It is, however, a very rare fish on our coasts; so rare indeed, that some celebrated writers on natural history speak of it as if only one or two rare specimens had ever occurred. This, however, is not the fact; it is certainly a scarce fish, and, being small—for it seldom exceeds six or seven

inches in length, and is very ugly to boot—the fishermen who catch them, much oftener than is supposed, throw them aside as worthless. We ourselves have occasionally taken them with a hook and line; and, having put the edible merits of the first we captured to the test, were so well satisfied with the result, that we have taken care to turn all the rest that have come in our way to the same account. The best parts are about the head and collar-bones, which are beyond description delicious.

13. *The Torsk.*

The torsk is entirely a northern fish, swarming about the Shetland Islands and the Orkneys, from whence we receive it in the form of dried salt-fish; but it is rarely brought to our markets in a fresh state. It has, however, been sometimes brought from Scotland to London in well-boats; but this, it seems, only occurs at rare intervals. When eaten quite fresh it is said to be rather tough; on which account it is usually preferred in a salted state. It has something the form of a ling, but is of a much stouter make. As we can only speak from our own knowledge of this fish in its salted state we must defer any further observations upon it until we come to treat upon the subject of salt fish.

SECTION III.

FISHES OF THE FLOUNDER KIND.

The flounder tribe, commonly called flat fish, contain several varieties of fish, many of which are celebrated, not only for the excellence of their culinary qualities, but also for the facility with which they may be preserved without artificial aid, as also for their wholesome and nutritious properties. Most of them are common upon our coasts, and some of them may be met with in our fish-markets in a fit condition for the table at all times and seasons of the year.

1. *The Turbot.*

The good qualities of a turbot are too universally known to require either praise or comment from us. It is a fish of a remarkably rounded form; the upper part of the body is brown, minutely speckled, as if strewed over with fine sand, varying considerably in the depth of tint, in different specimens, from a pale cast to a dark and almost cinereous hue; depending, in great measure, upon the colour of the soil the fish has been inhabiting. The same side is also interspersed with a number of small bony tuber-

cles, placed without any order, and varying in number in different fish.

If in good order, the pale side is of an opaque, light cream colour, with a slight blush of a pink or reddish hue, particularly about the fins. When it is out of season it is of a pale white, approaching to a milk-and-water cast. As good a proof as any of the high condition of a turbot is the thickness through the body; and whenever this occurs you may rely upon it the fish is a good one. The redness of the gills and moisture of the body denote its freshness. When stale, the skin looks dry, and the pale side acquires a dull reddish tint of a darker cast between the flakes, which then become visibly developed. The turbot is, however, a fish that keeps very well, and, particularly in the winter season, is perfectly good even when it presents the stale look above mentioned. To prevent these appearances, it is a practice of fishmongers to be constantly pouring water over the best fish; but these acquire a soddened look, and may be recognised accordingly.

A turbot has frequently a red appearance about the tail, which, although in reality no detriment, injures the look of the fish; to counteract which, fishermen are in the habit of opening a vein near the tail whilst the fish is living;

which, allowing the blood to escape, prevents this unsightly appearance.

Turbots sometimes grow to a very large size. The largest of the kind we have received any authentic account of, was one caught off Whitby in the spring of 1832, which weighed as much as 190lbs.; but from about fifteen to twenty pounds may be considered the average weight of these fishes usually met with in our markets, although thirty, or even forty pounds, is by no means an unusual size. The best flavoured are those ranging between twelve and twenty pounds.

In the northern parts of the kingdom this fish is called a *bret*, and in Scotland it is known by the name of *bannock-fluke* or *rawn fluke*.

2. *The Brill.*

The *brill* bears a close resemblance to the *turbot*, but has a narrower body; it is also thinner through, and its dark side is free from the small spiny tubercles with which the upper side of the *turbot* is always interspersed. There is little difference in the colour of the dark sides of these fishes, but the *brill* never acquires the rich creamy-pink cast of the *turbot* on the pale side; which, at its very best, is only a pale or dull yellowish white, acquiring a bluish milk-and-water or curdy appearance, or a mottled kind of mixture

of bluish milk-and-water tints with eurdy milk-white, particularly about the fins. The opaque, or yellowish whiteness of the under side, and total absenee of the milk-and-water east, is the best proof of the good condition of a brill.

It does not grow to anything like the size of the turbot; seldom exceeding ten pounds, and the greater proportion not reaching to more than half that weight. It is a good and wholesome fish, but labours under the disadvantage of bearing too elose a resemblanee to the turbot; and, as it does not come up to the latter in exeellenee, the best brill that ean be proeured will be no more than a turbot of moderate, if not indifferent quality.

At Plymouth this fish is ealled a holibut, or halibut, although that title belongs to a totally different kind of fish, being the one we shall next notiee. In Cornwall it is ealled a kite, and in the northern parts of the kingdom a pearl.

3. *The Halibut, or Holibut.*

The true halibut grows to a size we may fairly term enormous, instaneees having oeeurred of these fishes weighing as much as 500lbs.; and one hundredweight is no uneommon size. It is of a much more elongated shape, not only than either the turbot or the brill, but than most others

of the flounder tribe, excepting the soles. The moderate-sized fish, of from twenty to fifty pounds weight, are the best, as the larger ones are very dry and coarse, and possess little flavour. On account of its vast size this fish is usually cut up and sold in slices. The best parts are the flakes about the fins, and the pickings about the head; the other parts, though firm, are rather insipid. It may be dressed in every way a turbot may be done, as will be pointed out hereafter; and, although inferior to the turbot, it is a very valuable fish, and has one very great recommendation, that you may make a dish of it of which a blind person may partake without any danger of being choked by the bones.

It is in best season during the spring.

4. *The Plaice.*

The plaice may be distinguished from all the rest of the flounder tribe by the orange-coloured spots upon its dark side. When it is in good season, the under side is of an opaque, creamy white, with a slight blush of pink over it. If it is of a milky white, or inclining to a curdy or milk-and-watery cast, it is out of season. Another proof of the goodness of a plaice is the thickness through the body; and it ought to be stiff. The freshness may be tested by the brightness of

the eyes, freshness of the colouring on the dark side, and clear moisture of the slime.

It is a fish that grows to a respectable size, sometimes attaining to as much as ten pounds or upwards; but about one-half that weight may be considered as the average size of a full-grown fish.

When in prime order, it is excellent; but, from some cause we are unable to account for, we have not, even at the most favourable times of the year, been able to find above one or two large plaice out of a dozen that can be considered in first-rate condition; and, when otherwise, they are a very watery and insipid fish: so that, whether you get a very good or a very bad fish, will depend entirely upon the choice you make; and, unless you really understand something about the matter, leaving the fish vender out of the question altogether, the chances are always six to one at least against you, and sometimes a great deal more. The best time of the year for plaice is the latter end of the autumn; experienced fishermen say, during the blackberry season; at which time you will find more of these fish in good order than at any other time of the year, although some may be found good as late as the middle or latter end of March.

The large plaice are best boiled; but the

small ones should be fried. The roe should not be boiled in the body of the fish; but separately, as it takes a much longer time to do than the fish itself does, and if retained in the body of the latter until properly done, the fish itself would be boiled to rags.

5. *The Flounder.*

The flounder grows to the weight of about three or four pounds; but the greater number of those exposed for sale in the market do not exceed the weight of half a pound. It resembles a plaice in shape, but wants the orange spots on the dark side; and may also be distinguished not only from the latter fish, but also all other flat fish, by possessing a row of small sharp spines surrounding the upper sides, placed just below the junction of the fins with the body. Another row marks the side line, and runs half-way down the back. The dark side is sometimes spotted with dirty yellow, and sometimes the prevailing dark colour is marbled with a darker shade of the same hue; but the depth of tint varies in different specimens, depending chiefly on the colour of the ground they swim over. The lower side is white, but often marked with dusky particles of a dirty brownish cast, either entirely or partially covering it. This is considered rather as a proof

of the good condition of the fish than otherwise ; but the most certain proof of goodness is the thickness of the body and the opaque colouring of the pale side, which should have the appearance of white earthenware. If it has a clear or curdy appearance, the fish is out of season. Flounders are in the best order in the latter end of the autumn and early part of the winter ; though some may be found in good condition, not only through the whole winter, but also in the early part of the spring. Their condition depends in great measure on the time of their spawning, some shedding the roes much earlier than others ; at which time they fail in condition, and remain for some time after spawning out of season. They are inferior to most other kinds of flat fish, being apt to be soft and watery ; a defect which may, however, be in a great measure removed by adhering to the directions we shall lay down hereafter, when we come to point out the way of cleaning and preparing fish for cooking.

6. *The Dab.*

The dab is a very nice little fish, resembling the two preceding ones, from which it may be distinguished, not only by possessing rough scales, but also by the clear, pearly whiteness of its pale

side, with the exception of that portion which covers the intestines, which, being of an opaque white, contrasts strongly with the clear white of the other part of the body. This fish rarely exceeds a foot in length, but is a very good fish when nicely fried; and few are to be met with from August until April that are not in good condition; but after that time they go out of season, and few good ones are again to be met with until towards the latter end of the summer.

7. *The Smooth Dab, or Mern Sole.*

The smooth dab resembles the common dab; but is without the rough scales of the latter, and is of rather a rounder make. It is a common fish in most parts of the West of England, and is in season at the same time as the common dab; but certainly is not equal to the latter fish in flavour. It is known by a variety of names on different parts of our coasts; as smear dab, town tab, lemon dab, and sand fluke.

8. *The Whiffe, or French Sole.*

The whiffe is a remarkably thin fish, of an elongated make. The upper side is of a pale brown, the lower side a clear pearly white tinged with a reddish cast; and, from the extreme thinness of the fish, if held up to the light, it is semi-

transparent. It grows to the length of about a foot and a half, but, from being so thin, it rarely weighs a pound. It is, take it altogether, the worst of the whole flounder tribe, being soft and insipid. In some parts of Cornwall this fish is called a earter; at Plymouth it is called a French sole.

These fish are better when fried than cooked in any other manner, and ought to be dressed soon after they are caught.

9. *The Top-Knot.*

This is a singular-looking fish, being more of a square than either a round or oblong form. Its head is large, and formed like that of a brill or turbot. The colour of the upper side varies much in different specimens, acquiring the same colour as the rocky ground which it always inhabits, varying from a reddish brown to a deep cinereous cast. When at rest it always adheres to the rocks, and, being of a corresponding colour, it is difficult to detect its presence, even in very clear and shallow water. The under side is a pearly bluish white, slightly tinged with a reddish cast. It is a small fish, seldom exceeding seven or eight inches in length, and, although not very scarce, is not often captured, as it does not take a bait very readily, and inhabiting rough and foul ground, is altogether out of the reach of

the trawlers. It is a good fish when nicely fried, but in no way superior to many more common fishes which may at all times be more easily and cheaply procured.

10. *The Sole.*

The sole is too well known a fish to require any particular description, except to point out the distinction between a good and a bad one; for, although these fish may be obtained in good order all the year round, yet there is a great difference, in point of goodness, between the different fishes of this kind we find exposed for sale at the same time. The best proof of goodness is the thickness of the body; and the pale side should be of a creamy white. A milky whiteness denotes that it is not in prime order, and a bluish tinge that it is thoroughly out of season. The upper side varies considerably in depth of tint, from a pale fawn east to a deep brown, depending upon the colour of the ground the fish usually frequents.

The freshness is tested by the brightness of the colour on the dark side, and the transparency of the slime, which assumes a dull east if the fish has been long out of the water. A frothy appearance may also be discerned on the pale side when the fish is perfectly fresh, which is never perceptible after the fish has been some time caught; but

all soles keep well, particularly if gutted soon after they are taken, so that they will remain good some time after the appearances above pointed out have departed.

There are three other kinds of fish very much resembling the sole in general appearance, but which never attain to any considerable size. The first of these is

11. *The Red-Back*

(So called from the prevailing colour on the dark side), which is mottled with darker shades of the same cast. It is rather broader than the common sole in proportion to its length; from which it may also be distinguished by the superior size of its scales. It is a small fish, seldom exceeding nine inches in length, and the greater number we meet with are not above half that size. It is not very common, but is occasionally taken by the trawlers; and, in point of goodness, is very inferior to the common sole.

12. *The Thick-Back*

Is a still smaller fish than the last. It is of reddish brown, speckled with minute spots of a darker hue of the same brown; with small brown marks or blotches on the dark side, varying in size and number in different specimens, but princi-

pally at the junction of the fins with the body. Although small, they are quite equal in goodness to a sole of the same size. They are not a very common fish, but may be frequently seen in Plymouth fish-market in the early part of the spring.

13. *The Scald Fish*

Seldom exceeds four or five inches in length. It is shaped like a sole, but differs from it essentially in having the eyes placed on the reverse side of the head. Its scales are very large in proportion to its size, but come off so readily as to be always rubbed away by the rough usage it encounters in the trawl nets; which gives it the naked, par-boiled appearance from whence it derives its name. It is rather a scarce fish, which is little to be regretted, as, independently of its insignificant size, it does not possess an agreeable flavour.

There is also another small kind of sole, called the *solinette*; which is a little fish of about the same size as the last, but is of a longer make than any of the preceding. It is a very scarce fish, and even when taken by the trawlers is usually thrown overboard with the weeds and rubbish of the trawl; so that it very rarely finds its way into the fish-markets.

SECTION IV.

DORIES.

The John-Dory is the only species of this tribe that is commonly met with on our shores, and the only one ever used as food; for, although it has a disreputable relative, called the boar-fish, which is occasionally taken, the latter is so bad a fish as to be rejected by all classes; so that it has only to be known to be avoided. In shape it bears some resemblance to the dory, but its immense eyes, contracted mouth, the want of the long filaments upon its back, and the absence of St. Christopher's mark, and its prevailing dull-red colour, are quite sufficient to point out the difference to the eye of the most casual observer.

As for the true John-Dory, his culinary merits are so great, that he may fairly be entitled to claim the palm of excellence with any of the products of the sea. He seems to have borne a highly merited reputation from the earliest ages of antiquity, particularly amongst the Greeks, who, in ancient days, gave him the name of their supreme god Zeus, or Jupiter. Its modern title of dory is said to be derived from the French word, *adorée*, "worshipped." The Greeks of modern times also treat this fish with due respect, by hanging it up in their most sacred places of wor-

ship. According to some authorities, also, the dory, and not the haddock, is said to have been the fish that furnished St. Peter with the tribute-money ; which has so far obtained credit, that many contend that its name is derived from the Italian *il janitore*, or “ the door-keeper,” in allusion to St. Peter’s office of keeping the keys of heaven. Others assert his dark spot was occasioned by the finger marks of St. Christopher, who captured one of these fishes as he was in the act of carrying his blessed Master across a ford. His name of John is stated to be derived from nothing more nor less than a corruption of the French word *jaune*, or “ yellow,” from the golden tint that prevails over this fish when first taken out of the water. Be this as it may, we claim no better name for him than he has acquired by his culinary excellence ; and we coincide with the celebrated Mr. Quin, that no fish is entitled to a better name in this respect. The love this eccentric personage bore to John-Dories, which he used to eat with the livers of surmulletts, has given rise to some anecdotes at his expense. In his opinion the inhabitants of Plymouth ought to be the happiest people on the face of the earth, from the simple fact of their being blessed with a never-failing supply of this superlatively good fish : but it seems that, upon subsequently

paying a visit to that part of the world, the reality did not come up to his expectations; for he afterwards expressed an opinion, that, although the natives had a plentiful supply of good fish, they had no notion of cooking it, and were totally ignorant of the art of melting butter, so that, if he looked for perfect happiness on earth, he must go elsewhere in search of it.

The habits of this singular being were very remarkable. He was often, without any apparent cause, known to be in bed for two or three days together, sleeping away soundly during the greater part of the time. Whilst staying at Plymouth, his first question, when he awoke in the morning, was to inquire into the state of the fish-market, and, if the report was unfavourable, he would merely desire to be called again on the following morning, and again betake himself to repose.

On one occasion, on his return from Plymouth to Bath, his love for John-Dories still remaining unabated, he sent directions to the landlord of the inn at Ivybridge to procure some of the finest fish of this kind to be ready on the day he arrived there; and, in order that these might be dressed in the highest degree of perfection, he actually had a cask filled with salt-water strapped on to his carriage, not esteeming fresh-water to

be so well adapted to the purpose. Now, it unfortunately so happened, that, in consequence of bad weather, or some other cause, no dories could be procured, and so annoyed was Quin with the disappointment, that, although an excellent dinner in every other respect had been provided, he refused to partake of it, or even to enter the house, and, casting his water-cask adrift, he left the place in a rage, and proceeded, fasting, on his journey.

Dories are caught in very considerable quantities on the southern coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall, where some may be found in season nearly all the year through. A greater number of the full-grown fish are, however, to be met with in prime order from Michaelmas to Christmas. The small ones are always good, and even amongst the large ones, if there is a good supply in the market, it seldom happens but that one or two good ones may be picked out. The best proof of sound condition is the thickness of the body; so that if you select the stoutest fish you can see from a lot of others, you will be certain to have the best one. Freshness is tested by the redness of the gills, the brightness of the eyes, and freshness of the colours, though the latter often acquire a faded appearance if the fish has been knocked about long in a trawl-net; but,

being a very firm fish, the trawl does it very little injury. It is a fish that keeps remarkably well; but should be gutted soon after it is caught, and, if kept for a day or two, the inside should be washed out with vinegar.

Large dories are best boiled, but the small ones should be fried; they may also be cooked in a variety of other ways, as we shall hereafter point out.

Dories are sometimes met with weighing as much as twelve pounds, but from two to four or five may be considered the usual average size of a full-grown fish of this kind.

SECTION V.

FISHES OF THE SALMON KIND.

The Salmon.

The salmonidæ, or salmon tribe, are the very aristocracy of fishes; and of these the salmon, the acknowledged king of the fresh waters, ranks pre-eminently first.

Although a fish so familiarly known, it will be necessary for us to point out some directions by which the proper condition of this fish may be

determined; and this, perhaps, is more important for persons to know who reside near the places where the fish are taken than those who live at a distance; as it is notorious that the best-seasoned fish are sent away to wherever they are likely to find the readiest market, whilst the worthless are retained for home consumption. The period of these fish coming in and out of season is determined in a great degree by that at which they deposit their spawn. When the rudiments of roe first show themselves the fish is usually in greatest perfection; but, as the roe increases in size, the fish gradually declines in health, and, on the eve of spawning, is completely out of season; still, as some of these fish shed their spawn many months earlier than others, some salmon may be met with in tolerable condition throughout the greater part of the year; yet the time the greatest numbers may be met with in proper order is from about the latter end of May to the beginning of September.

The best proof of the condition of a salmon is a small head, a thick shoulder, a great roundness and breadth over the back, and continued thickness down even to the tail; the cheeks and scales should be resplendent and silvery; and the fish itself stiff and firm. When out of season the sides lose their bright, silvery cast, which then

acquire a coppery tinge; and the cheeks, particularly of the male fish, become marked with orange-coloured stripes; and, when at the very worst, the whole fish assumes a dusky cinereous hue, whilst its thin and emaciated appearance denotes the wretched state of the fish; but long before this, in fact as soon as the sides assume the coppery tinge above alluded to, the fish is unfit to be eaten. When a salmon first comes in from the sea, it is often covered with small parasitical insects, which, so far from denoting ill-health, affords a certain proof of the excellence of its condition.

The male fish, or, as it is sometimes called, the kipper, is known from the female by the hooked shape of the lower jaw; and this, as the fish grows out of season, increases in size, forming at length a groove in the upper jaw.

When the fish is cut up, the flesh should be of a beautiful pink, and the flakes clearly developed. This is the best proof of its being in season.

It is a common practice to crimp salmon, in order to make it eat dry and crisp; but, to produce this effect, the operation must be performed immediately after it is taken out of the water; the fish being killed with a few hard blows over the head, and the incisions made instantly afterwards.

It is as unnecessary as cruel to crimp the fish whilst they are alive ; nor is the practice by any means so general as is supposed. At any rate, at every salmon fishery we have ever visited the universal practice has been to kill the fish before the crimping process has been resorted to.

To choose crimped salmon, see that it rises at the edges of the cuts, and that the muscle is much contracted between them ; and that the flakes are well disclosed, and the flesh firm and elastic.

When stale, the scales lose their bright appearance, and, unless continually wetted, become dried up ; and the gills, instead of a red, assume a dirty brown tint ; to counteract which appearance dishonest fish-venders have a practice of staining the gills with blood ; but, as some of this generally runs over the body of the fish, the trick is at once exposed to all those who have been put on their guard against this imposture ; although we have heard the fish venders declare it to be blood flowing from the expiring fish, which must have died at least a week previously.

The Salmon-Peel.

The salmon-peel, or salmon-trout, very much resembles a salmon in its external appearance ; but may be recognised as a distinct species by the fins, particularly the pectorals, which in the

salmon are of a dark, inky cast; those of the salmon-trout being pale, and in fact almost white. Both species of fish are in season at the same time of year; and the salmon-trout, like the true salmon, when in proper order, presents the same bright, silvery east, and also the beautiful pink flakes, when cut up, as the latter fish. In selecting a fish of this kind, see that it has a very small head, that it is thick about the shoulders, and deep-bodied, and that the scales look bright, silvery, and moist.

If the fish is of a lanky form, and the scales look dull, it is out of season. If the skin looks dry it is stale.

This fish is usually met with from about one pound to three pounds weight. The larger fish are generally most plentiful during the months of May and June; and the smaller ones, (being the fry of the same year, which, having gone to sea, have returned again to the fresh water) about the latter end of July, and through the month of August to the early part of September.

It must, however, be remarked, that this fish often exceeds the limits of size that we have mentioned, reaching occasionally to as much as eight or ten pounds; and Mr. Yarrell, in his History of British Fishes, informs us, that he had seen a salmon-trout in the possession of

Mr. Groves, the fishmonger of Bond-street, that weighed as much as seventeen pounds.

The Bull-Trout.

The bull-trout, budge, or bouge (sometimes called a truff), resembles the two last-mentioned fishes; but is of a less elegant form, having a much larger head, and the sides and belly being of a less silvery cast, caused by the extreme thinness and transpareny of its scales, beneath which the colouring of the body can be discerned. The tail fin, which is slightly forked whilst the fish is young, becomes convex as the fish gets older; from which circumstance the adult fishes of this kind are known by the name of round tails.

This fish grows to a large size, sometimes reaching to as much as twenty pounds; but from four to eight pounds is the most common size. It is in season at the same time with the salmon; but is not so highly esteemed as either that fish or the salmon-peel, its flesh never acquiring that perfection of flavour, or attaining that beautiful pink cast, for which the other two fishes are so remarkable; for even when in prime order the flesh of the bull-trout only acquires a pale orange tint, and at other times it is of a yellowish white. On this account it is generally

acknowledged to be an inferior fish, and is consequently sold at a much lower rate than either the salmon or the salmon-peel.

The Grey or Lake Trout.

The great lake or grey trout very much resembles the bull-trout in flavour. It is a fish confined to our large standing waters, as the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and some of the large fresh-water lochs in Scotland. It grows to as large a size as the salmon; but the middling-sized fish are considered the best, although, upon the whole, it is not a fish that appears to be held in much estimation. It is in season during the summer.

The Common Trout.

There is no fish that varies more in condition than the common trout. The best are found in clear running waters; and, when in best condition, their flesh has often the pink hue of the salmon. Still this tint is only peculiar to the trout inhabiting certain localities, as in many of our waters these fishes are never found to acquire it. In the absence of this, the best proof of their being in healthy condition is a coating of a deep brown cast just beneath the skin; which is very perceptible when the fish is dressed, the flesh

beneath being of an opaque white or cream colour. In some waters the trout come into and go out of season much earlier than in others.

The best proof of condition is a small head, thick shoulders, deep body, bright scales and spots, and a general splendour of colouring throughout.

The small trout come in season earlier than the larger ones; the former being met with in tolerable order by the latter end of March or the early part of April, the latter rarely before the beginning of May. They are in best order at the middle or latter end of June, and continue good until September; after which the fish begins gradually to decline, and by October may be considered to be out of season.

The Parr.

The parr is a delicious little fish of about six inches long, very like a small trout; but from which it may be distinguished by possessing a more elegantly proportioned and rounded form, a blunter nose, and a smaller mouth; whilst a large dark spot on the gill cover, for which the parr is singularly remarkable, affords an unerring mark of distinction.

The parr is in best order during the three summer months; and is one of the most delicious

fish we possess, being infinitely superior to a trout of the same size. It is excellent when fried, and is quite equal to charr when potted in the same manner; the directions for which will be given hereafter.

The Charr

Is much larger than the fish last mentioned, being from nine inches to a foot in length. It is of a longer make than either of those we have previously noticed. It is in best season from July to October; but is not often taken in any considerable quantities until the months of November and December, when these fishes approach the shallow waters for the purpose of depositing their spawn; at which time they are beginning to fail in condition. They are only met with in some particular localities; as in the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and in one or two large lakes in Wales. Their freshness is tested in the same manner as that of the trout.

The Grayling

Is an excellent fish, and an exceedingly useful one, as it serves to supply the place of the trout, coming into season at the time the latter begins to decline, and remaining good as long as the other continues out of condition. It sometimes attains

as large a size as five pounds; but from three-quarters of a pound to three pounds weight is the most common size.

A full grown grayling, when in prime order, is of a dark colour about the head and gills, having a tinge of gold about the sides, varying with a purple cast when viewed in different lights. The little ones are of a bright silvery hue, and are in season all the year round. These fish are cooked in the same manner as the trout, and their freshness may be tested in the same way as that of the latter fish.

Smelts and Atherines.

The smelt is in best season from August to May. Its goodness, as well as the freshness of its condition, may be detected by a bright, silvery appearance, the redness of its gills, and the brightness of its eyes. If a dull cast prevails, the eyes look sunk, and the abdomen discoloured, it is stale and unfit to be eaten.

The Atherine

Resembles a smelt, and is known by that name all along the southern line of the coast, where, it seems, the true smelt is rarely if ever to be found. It may, however, be easily distinguished from the true smelt by the form and size of its second

dorsal fin, which is large and expanded, with long soft rays connected by a membrane; whilst the fin in the smelt is a small fleshy exerescence like that of the trout and salmon without any rays whatever, and is termed the adipose fin, which is peculiar to the whole salmon tribe.

Both the smelt and atherine bear a close resemblance in flavour, being extremely delicate, and when properly fried make a very nice dish in themselves; but they are usually served up to table for the purpose of garnishing salmon, turbot, cod, and other large fish.

The atherine does not continue in season so long as the smelt, as the former deposit their spawn about the latter part of January or the early part of February; at which time they are out of season, and so remain for some time afterwards.

They are in best condition from Michaelmas to Christmas.

The Vendis and Gwyniad.

These two little fishes, which are about eight or nine inches in length, resemble the herring in their general appearance; but, from possessing the adipose second dorsal fin, are classified amongst the salmonidæ. They are found in a few of our

lakes. They do not possess much flavour, but are not amiss when nicely fried.

SECTION VI.

EELS AND CONGERS.

Eels.

Eels and congers are both excellent fish. Of the former kind, there are three distinct varieties; the silver eel, the grig, and the broad-nosed eel. Of these, the silver eel grows to the largest size, instances having occurred of this fish attaining to as much as twenty pounds weight: but occurrences of this kind are rare; three pounds being considered a good size for one of these fish, and by far the greater number of those we meet with in the markets being under a pound weight. The silver eel is remarkable for a bright silvery cast over the belly, and is of a longer make than either of the other two varieties. The grig is of a greenish-brown on the upper side, and yellow on the belly. The broad-nosed eel is of a darker colour on the upper side than the two preceding, varying much, however, in depth of tint in different specimens—from an olive-brown to the darkest shade of that colour—

in some approaching almost to blackness; but the belly is always of a paler cast, and sometimes perfectly white. It is also of a broader form about the shoulders, and has a larger head and wider snout.

The silver eel and grig are about of equal goodness when of the same size; but, as the largest eels are always the best, the silver eel has so far the advantage over the other. The broad-nosed eel, although a good fish, is certainly inferior in quality to the other two.

Eels are found both in fresh and salt water; but those taken in the former, particularly if clear streams, are the best; those inhabiting foul and muddy waters invariably possess a less agreeable flavour. Eels are in season nearly all the year, but are at their worst from April to June, which is their spawning time; an operation that is performed whilst they lie embedded in the mud; but from the effects of which they are less injured, and recover more rapidly than any kind of fish we are acquainted with.

These fish possess wonderful tenacity of life; living and exhibiting active motions many hours after they have been taken from their proper element; being often found alive and vigorous when exposed for sale in the markets. When

dead, if the slime looks clear, and the skin full, the fish is fresh; but if the slime looks dry, and the skin at all wrinkled, they are stale.

Eels are often skinned whilst alive; which is an unnecessary act of barbarity, as their skins will come off very easily as long as the fish is quite fresh; and they should always, as an act of common mercy, be killed before the operation is attempted. This may easily be done by severing the spine just behind the head, but taking care not to cut it quite off; for, if this be done, the fish will live for some time after. How, or why this is, we leave to wiser heads than ours to determine; such, however, is the fact, the occurrence of which we have witnessed over and over again. Another way to kill eels speedily, is, to throw them into dust or dry ashes; either of which, adhering to their slimy coats, and thus stopping up the pores, kills them very speedily, and also renders them more easy to skin afterwards. If a small portion just above the tail is cut off the fish will soon bleed to death. The directions for skinning eels will be given in that portion of the work that relates to the cleaning and preparation of fish previously to the cookery.

The Conger.

The conger bears so great an external re-

semblance to the common eel as to induce many to believe that the former is only an eel of larger growth, and that the difference in colour and general appearance results solely from the constant residence of the latter in salt water; but, by any one who knows anything about fish, the two fishes are easily distinguishable from each other. First, the conger, of whatever size it may be, has always the snout and upper jaw projecting beyond the lower one; whilst the common eel is equally remarkable for its protuberant lower jaw. Secondly, the lateral line is scarcely visible in the common eel; whilst that of the conger is very distinctly marked—broad, and of a whitish colour. And, thirdly, the internal structure of these fishes differs still more widely; the conger having a great many more bones than the eel, particularly towards the tail, and in possessing a greater number of vertebræ.

The conger grows to a large size, sometimes reaching to as much as eighty, ninety, or even one hundred pounds weight; but the best for the table are from ten to twenty pounds; these, when properly cooked, present a most delicate appearance, from the snow-like whiteness of their flesh, and, what is still better, possess a rich and truly delicious flavour. When stewed, conger is quite equal, and certainly, as far as wholesome-

ness is concerned, superior to the best fresh-water eels; possessing all the excellence of high flavour of the latter, without the luscious grossness which so many object to in eels in whatever manner they may be cooked. Yet, with all these advantages, from some cause or other, the conger is not popular with many persons, its consumption being chiefly confined to the lower classes; who, in the West of England, consume vast quantities of these fish, for which they usually pay a higher price than they could often procure cod and always ling of the very best quality.

The Cornish people put this fish into a pie. In the Channel Islands an excellent soup is made of it; and it is capable of being turned to advantage in a great number of other ways; as roasted, or baked with a forcemeat-pudding in its belly; fried in steaks or cutlets, and marinated or potted: but it is not good either boiled or broiled, except when it has been previously salted, and even in this state it does not equal either cod, ling, or hake.

In Cornwall a singular mode of curing conger prevailed even as far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth; which was merely to slit the congers in halves, and, without any further preparation, to hang them up in a kind of shambles erected for that purpose, where, allowing them to become fly-blown, so that all the parts liable to decom-

position were thus destroyed, the residue, being thoroughly dried in the sun, became in this manner fit for use. When perfectly cured, it was exported to Spain and Portugal, and there ground into powder, and used by the natives of those countries for the purpose of thickening their soups; but, although formerly carried on to some extent, we find that for some years past the trade has totally ceased.

Congers are in best season from May to January, the latter of which months is their spawning time, when the fish begins to decline, and does not regain its condition for some months afterwards.

In most of the fish-markets in the West of England, congers, when exposed for sale, are cut up in portions to suit different customers. At these times, the whiteness of the flesh, as contrasted with a muddy, dirty-looking cast, denote the condition of the fish; the quantity of fat that lies along the spine is also an indication of the high season of the fish. When the fish is entire, the best proof of its goodness is the stoutness of the body and the depth of the lateral line, which should be in a kind of deep furrow. If fresh, the eyes are bright and the skin is moist; if the skin looks dry, and the eyes dull, it is stale.

There is a great difference in the depth of colour of these fish ; some being of a pale brown, or even almost white on the upper part, and the belly white as snow. Others are of a deep brown or purplish tint, and some of an inky blackness ; but all of rather a lighter east upon the belly. This difference in colour is owing in great measure to the particualar kind of ground they inhabit ; those found amongst rocks being dark, and those in clean or sandy grounds of a lighter hue, according to the colour of the soil at the bottom.

SECTION VII.

FISHES OF THE CARP KIND.

There are several species of fish which naturalists classify as belonging to the carp tribe. Some of these are exeellent fishes, but the majority of them are soft, watery, and insipid, and will seareely bear comparison with even the very worst products of the sea.

The Common Carp and the Crucian.

The common carp is a very good fish when properly eoked, which is by being stewed in a rich gravy ; another species, the crucian, is a

very inferior fish, and, though capable of being made an agreeable dish, can never be rendered equal to the former fish. Externally, the two fishes bear a strong resemblance to each other; but as one is so much the superior, it is essential that we should give such directions as may enable our readers to detect the difference between them.

One certain rule for discrimination is the size, for a crucian seldom exceeds the weight of two pounds; so that if you select a fish of three or four pounds weight, you may, though not safe from deception, at any rate congratulate yourself upon being the purchaser of something monstrously wonderful. But these other criteria may always be relied on: — Thus, the crucian is a deeper-bodied fish than the common carp; its head is also shorter, and its nose more blunt. The colour also is paler; the sides being of a light olive brown, with a slight golden cast, becoming pale towards the belly, the lower part of which is white, whilst, in the true carp, the general colour is a deep brown on the back, growing paler, and acquiring a deep golden cast on the sides, passing into a lighter shade towards the belly. The head of the true carp is also of a much darker cast than that of the crucian; but the most certain and never-failing mark of distinction lies in the formation of the back fin,

which; in the former fish, sinks soon after its commencement; a peculiarity that does not occur in the latter fish.

The common carp sometimes attains to a considerable size, instances having occurred in this country of these fish weighing as much as fifteen, and even eighteen pounds; but these are mere pigmies in comparison to those of Germany and Italy. In the former country we are told they often grow so large as to weigh as much as seventy pounds, whilst from thirty to forty pounds is a size by no means uncommon. But the carps of Italy far exceed even these in bulk; instances having been recorded of their being taken in the Lake of Como, weighing as much as two hundred pounds.

The usual size of what may be termed adult carp in this country ranges between three and eight pounds.

The crucian very rarely exceeds two pounds, and about three-quarters of a pound may be considered its average size.

Carp are in best season during the month of April, whilst the roe is somewhat advanced, but before the time of shedding it commences. This lasts over a period of some weeks, as these fish do not deposit the whole of their eggs at once, but, like domestic fowls, continue to lay them from

time to time ; and, after this has gone on for some time, the fish becomes thin and emaciated, and a red and raw appearance is visible about the abdominal region, caused by the scales being rubbed off from that portion of the body.

In many waters that are well adapted for the fattening of carp, they are found to acquire a rank and muddy taint, either from the nature of the soil, or, more probably, from the particular property of some kind of vegetable matter upon which they subsist. This bad effect can be counteracted by placing the fish for a few days in a small pond or stew of clean water.

Two other modes have, however, been practised successfully in removing this muddy taste : one is to sew up a piece of bread in the body of the fish when it is undergoing the frying process previously to stewing, the bread being extracted before the fish is transferred into the stewpan ; the other, which is the French plan, is to pour a glass of strong vinegar down the throat of the fish whilst it is alive, which produces an instantaneous exhalation through the pores, which is said to be also greatly facilitated by instantly scaling the fish. The latter part of the proceeding we think had better be dispensed with, or at any rate not attempted so long as the fish has a spark of life remaining in him ; after which it is appre-

hended the scaling proecess would be of little or no serviee in produeing the desired result.

In Holland, we are informed, it is a very common practice, not only to keep earp alive for several weeks out of water, but even to fatten them by inelosing them in a net enveloped in wet moss, and feeding them oceasionally with bread sopped in milk; taking care to refresh them from time to time by throwing eold water over the moss. In winter they are transported to a considerable distanee paeked in wet moss in baskets.

The earp, although mentioned by Aristotle and Pliny, and some other aneient writers, does not appear to have been held in very high estimation in their days; and, though it has borne a fair repute in modern times, it is rather amongst our continental neighbours than ourselves. Aceording to a eelebrated French work on the art of cookery*, the head of the carp is the best part of him, being *le morceau d'honneur*, and whieh for that reason the author adds, "*doit être offert à la personne la plus considérée.*" Next to the head, the portions about the baek are considered to be the best.

The roe of the carp is often dressed with the fish, and is wholesome and well flavoured; in which

* La Nouvelle Cuisine Economique.

respect it differs from that part both of the pike and the barbel ; the spawn of the latter being of a poisonous nature, whilst that of the former is so strong a cathartic, as, to use the words of a French writer, to purge violently *par haut, et par bas* *, and to such a degree as to endanger the lives of the sufferers.

When out of season a number of small white warty excrescences appear on the top of the head of a carp, and whenever this occurs the fish is thoroughly out of season, and should be rejected accordingly. As long as the slime remains moist, and the scales look bright, the fish is fresh, but when the fish looks dry, the colours dull, and the eyes dim and sunken, it is stale.

In Italy and some other parts of the continent, a kind of caviar is made of the hard roe of the carp, which is considered equal in flavour to that of the sturgeon ; and finds great favour in the eyes of the Jews, who universally reject the caviar made from the sturgeon, which, being a fish without scales, is forbidden by the Levitical Law, and is consequently an abomination to all true Israelites.

* La Nouvelle Cuisine Economique.

The Fresh-water Bream

Is a fish something resembling a earp, but differing from it in the extreme depth of its body. Although held in little repute at the present day, these fish seem to have borne a better character some centuries ago. Thus, according to Chaucer,

“ Full many a fair partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breme, and many a luce* in stewe.”

Whilst an old French proverb says, “He who hath breams in his pond may bid his friends welcome.

The head and belly are said to be the best parts of a bream, whilst, as we have just before observed, the head and back are the best portions of the earp. Breams are dressed in the same manner as the latter fish, and the smaller ones may be fried; but they are rather insipid when cooked in that manner. Another plan is to broil them with the scales on; but even then they are very poor and tasteless. In Ireland the poorer classes cure them by splitting and salting them, and drying them in the sun; and when so cured they eat them with their potatoes.

These fish are in best condition from midsummer to Michaelmas. Their spawn is harmless, but possesses little flavour. Their spawning time

* A pike, or jack.

is May ; about which time and for a month or so afterwards, they are out of season.

Their freshness may be discerned in the same way as in the carp: when stale their eyes look sunk and dim, and a redness may be detected about the belly, particularly in the region of the ventral fins.

The prevailing size is from one to three pounds weight, although examples have been found of these fishes attaining to as much as seven or eight pounds weight.

The Rudd

Is a fish resembling the bream, but may be recognised as a distinct species by the eyes and fins, the sides of the latter being yellow, whilst those of the former are of a reddish cast; the fins of the latter are also red, those of the bream being of a light cast, tinged at the extremities with red or brown.

The rudd does not attain so large a size as the bream; still rudds of two pounds weight are sometimes taken; but a rudd weighing a pound is considered a fine fish of the kind. It is cooked in the same way as the carp and bream, and, although far inferior to the first, is certainly superior to the latter fish.

The rudd is not a general fish, yet the waters in which they are found generally afford a plenti-

ful supply of them. They inhabit the broads of Norfolk, and most of the fresh waters of that county; as also those of Cambridge and Warwickshire; they may also be met with in the Isis about Oxford, and are occasionally caught in the Thames.

As this fish is distinguished by various names in different localities, it will be necessary, to prevent confusion as to identity, to give such of them as we are acquainted with; which are rudd, red-eye, finscale, and shallow. The scientific name is *Leuciscus erythrophthalmus*. It is in season at the same time as the bream.

Roach, Dace, and Chub.

All these fishes are too familiarly known to require any particular description, and all bear a very bad culinary reputation, being watery, soft, and insipid, even to a proverb.

The best way to dress them is to fry them so thoroughly as to deprive them of every watery particle, and then, by the aid of good melted butter and anchovy sauce, they may pass as a dish of fish when no better kinds can be procured; and for this purpose the small fish are far more adapted than the large ones. All these fish are at their best, if such a term can be applied to them, from July to October.

The spawn of all these fishes is wholesome, and is by many considered the best part of them ; but it is tasteless, and carries out the old adage of “bad the crow, bad the egg;” and we must also bear in mind, that when these fishes are in spawn they are always out of condition, which may be detected by the white, warty excrescences which appear about the head, in the manner we have previously noticed as peculiar to the carp.

The Barbel

Is so bad a fish, that it is almost rejected by all classes in this country as an article of food ; and yet our French neighbours, by dint of good cookery, do contrive to make a very good dish out of such apparently impracticable materials, dressing it in the same way as the carp. But the spawn, from the poisonous qualities* we have already alluded to, is always rejected.

The large barbels are considered the best ; and the parts about the head around the tongue, and the pickings about the collar-bones are esteemed the choicest morsels.

This fish attains to a respectable size, ranging from between two to five pounds weight.

* *Antè*, p. 77.

The Gudgeon

Is a small fish of six or seven inches long; but which, in spite of the smallness of size, is held in fair esteem on account of its wholesome qualities and delicacy of flavour; hence it is recommended to invalids; and, as these fish cannot be eaten in too fresh a state, they are exposed for sale alive in small tubs or vessels. They soon decompose after death; which may be detected by a dull-red, discoloured appearance about the abdomen, through which the intestines often protrude. They ought, therefore, to be gutted as speedily as possible after they are taken, as the delay of even an hour or two may cause them to become tainted; when, if the precaution we have recommended had been adopted, they would have kept good for a much longer time.

The best, and we believe the only proper way of dressing gudgeons, is by frying them, when, if cleverly done, they will nearly equal smelts in delicacy of flavour.

Minnows, Loaches, and Bullheads,

When you can obtain a sufficient supply, make a very nice fry; but they ought all to be cooked very soon after they are taken, as they soon become tainted.

The Tench.

This fish is distinguished from all the rest of the carp tribe by the slimy coating, like that of the eel, with which its body is covered. It is a delicious fish when in prime order, being in our humble opinion by far the best of all the carp family, and it has decidedly the advantage of being capable of being eoked in a greater variety of ways than all the rest of them put together. Stewed tench, either alone or aecompanied by a few fresh-water eels, forms one of the best dishes the art of eookery can possibly be exereised upon; whilst few fresh-water fishes can equal a tench when either boiled or fried; added to which, it makes most excellent water souchy.

As these fishes bury themselves in the mud during the winter months, from which they do not emerge until the mild weather begins to set in, they can seldom be obtained in any quantity before April, from which time, until about the early part of June, they are in first-rate order; but when they commence shedding their spawn, which occurs about the middle of the latter month, they begin to decline; though they soon regain their health and strength, and are again fit for the table by the latter end of July or early part of August.

The male fish may be recognised from the

female by having the belly, or ventral fins, of a much larger size than those of the latter.

Tench are sometimes met with so large as to weigh five pounds; and an instance once occurred of a fish of this kind being taken at Thornville Royal that weighed as much as twelve pounds. What is still more wonderful, it was taken out of a small pond full of weeds and rubbish, and from a hole from under some roots, from whence it had no mode of egress; and, from the contracted limits of its prison, the fish being unable to maintain its natural position, had acquired a form, or rather deformity, suited to fit its place of confinement. In other respects it was in good health and condition.

The usual size of the tench we commonly meet with ranges from a quarter of a pound to a pound, or a pound and a half, although two pounds weight is not uncommon.

The best proof of health and condition is a rounded fulness behind the head, an elevated back, and a body deep and well filled out. The resplendent golden cast we often see upon the sides, although usually, is not always, a sure proof of the goodness of their flavour; neither is the dark, muddy cast we sometimes see any more certain proof to the contrary; instances having occurred where these fishes have presented a most beau-

tiful golden exterior, and yet have tasted so muddy, rank, and disagreeable as not to be eatable; whilst, on the other hand, others of an inky blackness have proved exceedingly well flavoured.

The muddy taint in tench may be removed in the same manner as we have before mentioned with respect to carp.*

The transparency of the slime, and general moisture of the body and brightness of the scales and eyes, afford certain proof of the fish being fresh. When the slime is dried up, the gills pale, and the eyes look dull and sunken, it is stale.

SECTION VIII.

PIKES AND LAUNCES.

There are two species of pike, the river-pike or luce, and the sea-pike or garfish; but which, although arranged by naturalists as belonging to the same family, have little resemblance to each other, excepting in the position of their fins; for in size, form, and flavour, they differ very materially from each other.

The fresh-water pike sometimes attains to as

* See *antè*, p. 75.

much as forty pounds weight; but instances of this kind are very rare, thirty pounds being an unusual bulk, and twenty pounds is considered a large size; so that from twelve to fifteen pounds may be considered as the common average size of the adults of this species. But the largest fish are not the best, being apt to be coarse: on this account, a preference is usually given to fish ranging from seven to ten pounds weight.

The fresh-water pike is a winter fish, being usually met with in best order from September to February. The spawning-time is about April, previously to which the fish begins to decline; so that even before it actually commences to deposit its spawn, it becomes out of season, and so continues for three or four months afterwards. The spawn itself, for the reasons we have already given*, is always rejected.

These fishes were, it seems, more highly valued in former times than they are at the present day; for, we find that in the reign of Henry VIII. they were considered so great a dainty that a large one fetched more than double the price of a house-lamb, and a young jack, or pickerel, than a fine capon. This high price has been attributed to the extreme scarcity of these fish in those days, they having, according to some authorities, been

* *Antè*, p. 77.

only just then introduced into this country; yet this cannot possibly be correct, as it is clearly established that pikes were a marketable commodity in this kingdom as far back as the reign of King Edward I.

The best portions of a pike are those over the ribs, which have, in addition to superiority in richness of flavour, the advantage of being free from those forked-bones with which the other parts of this fish are plentifully supplied, and which prove exceedingly troublesome.

In the first year the young pikes—or rather jack, for so they are technically styled until they attain the weight of four pounds—have a greenish cast over their scales, which assumes a grayish-brown tint, with large pale spots as the fish increases in size and age. When in highest condition, these spots acquire a golden tint, and the grey cast turns to an olive green, which, combined with a bulky thickness about the shoulders, and depth of body well filled out, afford a sure proof of the healthy order of the fish.

We have heard, and also read of fishes of this species being sometimes met with of a beautiful golden cast, with black spots, and of others possessing a green backbone; the latter of which are said to be highly esteemed, on account, we presume, of the rarity of this extraordinary peculiarity,

as green bones present anything rather than an agreeable appearance; and, in fact, is the chief, if not the sole, cause why the sea-pike (which also possesses this peculiarity) has fallen into unmerited disrepute.

Proof of freshness in a pike is shown by the moisture on the body, brilliancy of the scales, and a clear development of its colours, as also by the brightness of the eyes and redness of the gills: if these properties are wanting, the fish is stale.

The Sea-Pike, or Garfish,

Bears more resemblance to an eel than its fresh-water namesake, being of a remarkably elongated form, and carrying near the same depth of body from the gills to within one-fifth the distance from the tail; but its most remarkable features are produced by the long and slender form of the jaws, which project forward like the bill of a snipe or woodcock. It is of a dark green colour on the back, the sides and belly being bright and silvery. The bones, as we have previously remarked, are of a bright green colour; and this, added to a smell resembling copper, which this fish emits when first taken out of the water, has raised an unfounded prejudice against its edible qualities; for it is a mild, well-tasted fish, quite

free from any rank or disagreeable taint, resembling very much a mackerel in taste, but rather dryer. The emission of a strong and unpleasant odour from fish in a raw state affords no indication of any similarity in its flavour. Few fish, when raw, have a stronger or more disagreeable fishy smell than herrings, flounders, and fresh-water eels; and yet the flavour in none of these fishes is in the slightest degree affected by it, and none emit a more agreeable odour when cooked.

Garfish are usually eaten plain boiled; but we consider the best way to cook them is to split them through and extract the backbone, and then either fry or broil them. They are in season all the summer through, when it is very rare to meet with any that are not in excellent condition; for which good quality these fishes are more singularly remarkable than any other kind of fish we are acquainted with.

When perfectly fresh their sides are bright and silvery; if they look dim and dry they are stale. These ought to be cooked soon after they are caught, although they will keep far better than mackerel and many other kinds of fish.

Launces.

Launces bear a resemblance to the sea-pike in shape and in the silvery colouring of their

sides ; but absence of the beak-like elongation of the jaws shows a marked distinction between them. The former also differ essentially from the garfish in the number, shape, and position of their fins, the former wanting the ventral fins, with which the latter is provided ; and also in having a very elongated dorsal fin, which extends nearly from the nape to the tail, that of the sea-pike being placed far back, and, although elevated, being narrow.

There are two distinct kinds of launces, the greater and the less ; the larger kind being known in most places as the sand-eel, the smaller as the sand-launce. In many parts of Cornwall, however, we have found these titles reversed ; the term sand-launce being applied to the larger, and sand-eel to the smaller species. The latter it must, however, be observed, is so much the better fish, that the two will not bear any comparison with each other, the larger kind being watery and insipid, the smaller delicious beyond description. It is most essential, therefore, that we should point out how the two kinds may be distinguished from each other ; for, although the larger kind sometimes grows to the length of two feet, and the smaller species is seldom more than seven or eight inches, yet it often happens that small fish of the former kind associate themselves

with the latter full-grown fishes, so that numbers of both kinds, all of the same size, are often captured together.

The points of difference consist in the larger species, which we will distinguish as the sand-eel, having a more cylindrical or eel-like body ; the sides of the sand-launce being of a more flattened form, with the lateral line very slightly developed, which in the former fish is marked with a deep furrow : the colour of the upper part of the sand-eel is also darker than that of the sand-launce, being of a dark olive green ; that of the sand-launce, when living in its native element, being pale brown, turning first to a pale green after the fish is taken out of water, and then to a greyish blue.

When fresh, the sides look bright and silvery, and, as they grow stale, they assume a reddish cast.

They are in best season during the latter end of September and early part of October, at which time they are full of roe. The males may then be distinguished from the females by being more distended with the milt than the latter are with the spawn. They should be dressed with the roes in their bodies, and, when so cooked, are delicious. The great drawback to the utility of these excellent little fishes is, that

they decompose so very rapidly, that they can seldom be eaten to perfection at any considerable distance from the place where they are caught. The best way to keep them is to gut them, and dry them thoroughly in a towel. These fish may also be kept alive for a day or more, if placed uninjured amongst wet sea-weed the instant they are captured. Both species penetrate beneath the sand where left bare by the receding tide; from whence they are dug up with prongs and a partiular kind of rake or hook adapted for that purpose. They also swim about in large shoals, and are sometimes taken by bushels at a time in a very fine-meshed net. Yet good, as these fish are, far greater numbers are consumed as bait for catching other fish than as food, and they are seldom brought into the fish-markets along the southern line of the coast of England, although many places there abound with them.

SECTION IX.

FISHES OF THE MACKEREL KIND.

There are four species of mackerel, viz., the common mackerel, the cad or horse-mackerel, the tunny, and the banito. The two former are

very eommon fishes, but the two latter are only occasional visitors to our shores. The only shape in which we ean get tunny is in a piekled state from abroad, and the banito we never see in any shape or form. As our sole objeet is to treat about sueh fishes only as may be met with in our fish-markets, we shall therefore pass over the two latter, and eonfine our observations to the two former species.

The Common Mackerel

Is a very general fish, and perhaps more familiarly known to the publie than any other kind of fish whatever; and yet very few persons know how to reeognise a good fish of this kind from a bad one; though with no species of fish whatever is this knowledge more requisite; for not only is there a vast differencee between the relative goodness of eondition of these fishes, but they also keep so badly, that it is quite as necessary to know how the state of its freshness may be properly tested. On aeount, indeed, of fish of this kind keeping so badly, an act of Parliament was expressly passed so far back as the reign of King William III., authorising the sale of maekerel on Sundays; and thus the law has continued to the present day.

The best proof of the condition of a mackerel is a deep body well filled out, rising high, and rounded over the back, carrying its fulness very far down the body, which must be stiff and bent, with the tail curved upwards. Unless a mackerel is in prime order, a narrow black line of an inch or two in length unites the black bars or lines upon the back, a little above the lateral line, and between the tail and the termination of the second back fin. This is termed by scientific fisherman "the rogue's mark;" and, although not a proof that the fish is thoroughly out of season, is never found in a fish that is in first-rate condition.

When a mackerel is perfectly fresh, the back is of a pale green, the colour bright, and the black bars distinctly marked; those of the males being nearly straight, whilst those of the females are in a waving line. The sides and belly should look bright and silvery, varying, like mother-of-pearl, with blushes of pink about the pectoral fins. As the fish becomes stale, the upper part turns from green to blue, at first bright, but becoming duller by degrees; the pearly tint disappears from the sides; a dull shade of brown appears about the lateral line, and the slime, if not dried up, looks dirty; the body loses its stiffness, and, as decomposition advances, the skin

gets wrinkled, and the bowels oftentimes protrude; though the latter sometimes occurs from pressure, even before the fish becomes tainted by keeping; but, from whatever cause it may arise, a burst fish is never fit to be eaten.

The bulk of mackerel are in best season from July to Christmas. Many persons, however, consider that mackerel are best in the spring; which is a very great mistake, as at that time of the year they are thin and emaciated, so that amongst a thousand not one can be found that is really in proper order for the table, and, what is equally remarkable, scarcely one of these early spring fish is ever known to stiffen after death, which affords a certain indication that they are then out of season.

There is, however, at all times a great difference in the quality of the shoals of these fishes; some being found to contain a preponderating number of good fish, others of bad fish, and very often, as in the early part of the spring, of bad fish altogether.

We have generally found the largest fish, if in proper condition, to possess the finest flavour, although many prefer the smaller ones, as not possessing that degree of luscious richness which some object to in a mackerel; and which may account for persons liking the thin spring

mackerel, which certainly have no kind of rich flavour whatever about them.

The flesh of the mackerel, when the fish is in prime order, is of an opaque whiteness; when out of season, or kept too long, it assumes a dingy hue, like dirty water slightly tinged with milk. The usual weight of a full-grown mackerel in good season is about a pound and a half; but they sometimes exceed two pounds weight.

The Scad, or Horse Mackerel,

Bears some resemblance to the mackerel; but is flatter on the sides, and is remarkable for having its lateral line covered with a series of broad scales or plates. The general appearance of this fish is pleasing enough to the eye; the upper part being of a dusky-olive hue, varying with blushes of azure and green, which are very bright when the fish is just taken out of the water; the extremity of the gill-covers, throat and under jaw are of a purplish black, and bear the appearance of having been stained with ink.

This fish does not reach to quite so large a size as the common mackerel. Like the latter, these fish assemble together in large shoals, and are often taken in great quantities; but they yield very little profit to the fishermen, being very ill-tasted, and, therefore, few persons who have once

tasted them will purchase or eat them at any price. Yet, we have heard some persons speak favourably of them; and, as we often see them in the fish-markets in Devonshire, we suppose they must meet with purchasers, otherwise they would never find their way into places where such delicious fishes as sand-eels, weevers, and pouting, although abundant in the neighbourhood, are never exposed for sale.

SECTION X.

FISHES OF THE HERRING KIND.

There are no less than seven kinds of herrings sold in our fish-markets, all of them very good and wholesome fishes. They are as follows:—the herring, pilehard, sprat, anchovy, whitebait, and two species of shad, the allice and the twaite.

Herrings, Pilchards, and Sprats.

All these three species closely resemble each other in general appearance, but in flavour they differ altogether.

The difference in form consists in a pilehard being of a fuller make, well rounded over the back, and its sides well filled out; those of the

herring being flattened and compressed. The back fin is also differently placed in these fishes, being more forward in the pilchard than the herring; so that if suspended by it, the former will drop by the tail and the latter by the head.

Pilchards are in best season from July to Christmas, at which period they become heavy in spawn, when the flesh loses a great portion of its rich moisture; so that the fish at such times eats more dry, which some consider to be an improvement. After spawning, pilchards become out of season; but they are not so deteriorated by its effects as the herring, and the fishermen do not scruple to eat pilchards in this state, who would reject a shotten herring as utterly worthless.

Pilchards, if they can be eaten perfectly fresh, have very much the same rich flavour as salmon-peel; but, from their extremely oily nature, they acquire a rancid taste within a very few hours after they are taken; and the flesh, which, if cooked in proper time, would have been of a curdy whiteness, then acquires a dull, reddish cast.

The best way of cooking them is to broil them with their scales on, without gutting. They are also very good split, and peppered and salted. They also make a rich pie. In Cornwall numbers

are salted in every year, for home use, and a still greater number for foreign, consumption. But, although esteemed by the Cornish people, and those to whom they are sent abroad, they are too strong and rancid to suit the palates of the generality of persons, and will not bear any comparison either with Yarmouth bloaters, or Scotch red herrings.

There is very little difference in the relative goodness which these fish bear to each other as far as condition is concerned; so that if one is good, his companions are equally so. If fresh, and uninjured by pressure, their scales are bright as silver; if they look dull, or the scales fall off very readily, and they are red about the gills, they are getting stale.

Herrings, unlike the former fish, differ very much from each other in point of relative goodness; so that the selection of these is a matter of importance. The male fish are always the best; and may be detected by their superior size and depth of body, particularly when the spawning time draws near, the male being always more turgid with the milt than the female is with spawn. The bright silvery appearance and firm adhesion of the scales is the best proof of freshness. If the sides look dull, and a redness appears about the gills and abdomen, the

fish is too stale to be eaten. Herrings are in best season from June to November. After they have shed their spawn, which occurs about January, they are unfit to be eaten; but they continue good nearly up to the very eve of spawning.

Herrings are usually fried; but the Scotch people often boil them, and there are also a variety of other ways in which they may be turned to account, as we shall notice hereafter.

Sprats are so very like herrings excepting their difference in size, that many persons have treated them as the fry of the latter fish; but there are some marked differences which denote the species to be distinct. One is, that the sprat wants the axillary scales which are found both in the herring and pilchard: another is, that a serrated roughness runs along the whole line of the abdomen of the sprat, which in the other two species is perfectly smooth; added to which, the flesh of the former is of a much darker cast when cooked.

Sprats make a delicious fry, and are a most valuable acquisition to the poorer classes, being often taken in such abundance as to be sold remarkably cheap; but, like many other of the gifts of Providence, these fish are the less esteemed on account of the bountiful manner in which

they are supplied and the extremely low price at which they can be purchased.

Sprats are usually most abundant and in best season during the winter months. Their freshness may be tested in the same manner as in herrings and pilchards. The smaller fish are the best flavoured.

Whitebait.

These little fishes, which were formerly supposed to be the fry of the shad, are now satisfactorily proved to be a distinct species that never exceed the length of a few inches. These fish are in best season during the months of July, August, and September, and their merits are too well known to require one word from us upon that head, except to observe that, like sprats, the smaller-sized fish are better than those of larger growth. Their freshness may be detected by their silvery appearance; if they look dull and soft about the abdomen they are stale. These fish, like the pouting and sand-launee, keep very badly, requiring to be cooked very shortly after they are caught; on which account they are never eaten to perfection when transported to any considerable distance from the place where they are captured. They are found chiefly in the Thames.

Anchovies.

These fish, although inhabitants of our seas, are not often captured upon any part of our coasts, for want of some mode of fishing properly adapted to the purpose; those we consume are always sent over to us from abroad preserved in pickle. Like sprats and whitebait, the very large ones are not so good as those of smaller size.

Shads.

Both species of shads resemble an overgrown herring. Of these the alliee is the larger fish; being sometimes met with as much as two feet in length. The twaite is usually about one-half that length; and may be distinguished from the former fish by a row of dusky spots, five or six in number, commencing at the gill covers, and running along the side line about half-way down the body. The alliee has only one of these spots, which is placed immediately behind the gills. The twaite also possesses teeth, which the alliee is entirely without. These distinctions ought to be borne in mind, as there is a great difference in the merits of the two fishes; the alliee being in every respect the better fish.

The best season for both these fishes is April, May, and the early part of June. About July

they shed their spawn; and in order to allow them to do this unmolested, they are not allowed to be caught in the Thames after the 26th of June.

The criteria of freshness are the same as in the herring.

SECTION XI.

SPINOUS FISHES, INCLUDING FISHES OF THE PERCH KIND AND MULLET, BOTH RED AND GREY; THE SEA BREAM IN ALL ITS VARIETIES; WRASSES; AND THE TRIBE OF GURNARDS.

There are no less than six different kinds of perch amongst our edible fishes, although only one of them, the fresh-water perch, is commonly known by that appellation. The other kinds are the bass, ruff, great weever, and little weever, and the red mullet. All are excellent and wholesome fishes; but the greater part find more favour in the eyes of those who eat them than in those whose duty it is to clean and prepare them for the table; not only on account of the great tenacity with which the scales adhere to their body rendering their removal a tedious and difficult operation, but also on account of the sharp spines which all these fishes possess; some of which, indeed, are of a poisonous nature, so that a puncture from them not only inflicts consider-

able pain, but, as we shall notice hereafter, may be productive of very serious consequences.

The Common Perch.

This fish may readily be distinguished by its hog back, which is provided with two fins; the first armed with sharp spines, united by a membrane; the second consisting of soft flexible rays. It is remarkable for the dusky bands which ornament its upper part, the ground of which is a deep olive brown, changing to a golden tinge, varying in blushing tints of pink, blue, and purple, whilst the fish is fresh, but which vanish as it becomes stale. Perch are in best season from July to February, at the latter end of which they deposit their spawn, and continue out of season for a month or two afterwards.

They are a sweet, well-tasted fish, but the bones prove very troublesome in the smaller fishes. Perch, however, sometimes attain a respectable size. Pennant speaks of one that weighed as much as nine pounds, but it is not often that a perch of three pounds can be met with. Two pounds is not uncommon; yet half a pound may be considered the usual average weight at which this fish may be procured.

Perch may be cooked either by boiling, frying,

or stewing, and for water souchy they stand superior to all others.

The best proof of their good condition is the fulness and elevation of the back, and marked development of the colours; the freshness, as we have already remarked, may be tested in the same manner. These fish keep much better than the trout, and, in fact, most other fresh-water fishes. They are also remarkably retentive of life, so much so indeed, as to allow of their being brought alive to market; and Mr. Yarrell tells us, that in Roman Catholic countries they are frequently transported alive for forty or fifty miles to market, where, if not sold, they are again returned to their natural element, to be reproduced on some future occasion.

The Bass.

This fish has the spinous fins and hard, adhesive scales of the perch, but resembles a salmon in colour, and somewhat in form; on which account the fishwomen of the west of England have dignified it with the title of “salmon-bass,” although it is in no way whatever connected with the salmon family. Still, for all this, the bass is a very good fish and a very useful one, as it is capable of being cooked in a great variety of ways,—boiled, broiled, fried, stewed, baked,

or made up into a pie. It is also excellent when soured in the same way salmon and mackerel are usually done. Yet, although so good a fish, it is not a fashionable one, scarcely ever in any shape or form making its appearance at the tables of the wealthy; and yet it was highly esteemed amongst the ancients, many of their writers, and amongst them Pliny and Ovid, having celebrated its culinary excellence.

The bass attains sometimes to eighteen pounds weight; but about half that bulk is the usual size of a full-grown fish. They may, however, be met with of all sizes, from one ounce upwards.

Bass are in best order in the autumn and winter months. The best proof of the condition of this fish is the form of the body, which should be rounded over the back, without any intermediate depression, until it passes the anal fin. A dark olive-brown on the upper part is a sign of good condition. The sides should be bright and resplendent like silver. If a bass has a dull, leaden grey on the upper part, the sides dull grey instead of silvery white, and the back sinking just about the second dorsal fin, the fish is out of season.

The spawning time is during the summer; but, as some of these fishes deposit their spawn many weeks earlier than others, it follows that some

get into good condition at a time when others are unfit to be eaten.

The bass is a fish that keeps very well, and, if gutted and hung up by the head in a cool place, will, in moderate weather, remain good for two or three days without the assistance of salt or any artificial aid whatever.

The Ruff

Is a small fish of five or six inches in length, resembling a small perch; but from which it may be distinguished by having only one back fin, and wanting the dusky bands on the upper part, for which the perch is so remarkable. It affords a dainty dish when nicely fried. It comes in season about midsummer, and continues good until the spring following, when it sheds its spawn. The best proof of freshness is brightness of the eyes, vividness of the colours, and redness of the gills.

Weevers.

There are two kinds of weevers; the greater and the lesser weever. The former is remarkably long and slender, with flat compressed sides, and of about a foot in length, and with a forked tail; the lesser species is rather a deep-bodied fish, but its sides are flattened and compressed, and its

length about three or four inches. They are both prettily marked fishes, being striped over the body and sides with various colours; but they have a waspish look about their countenances, which is borne out by the formidable weapon they bear in the form of three or four short but sharp spines placed on the nape just behind the head, with which they can inflict a puncture attended with great pains, often succeeded by violent inflammation. To prevent these consequences, the French fishermen are compelled, by the laws of their country, to cut off these spines before they are allowed to expose the fish for sale. The most effectual cure for a wound of this kind is to make a strong brine, and then, plunging in the wounded part, to keep the brine as hot as the patient can bear it. Mr. Couch says,* that smart friction with oil soon restores the part to health. It is probably owing to a prejudice against these fishes arising from their poisonous weapons, that they are rarely eaten in this country, although held in great esteem amongst the French; which indeed they truly merit, as they possess a sweet and rich flavour, very like that of the sole. They are excellent fried or stewed. Although plentiful in

* Yarrell's British Fishes, p. 21.

the neighbourhood of Plymouth, they are never exposed for sale in the market. We have sometimes found them huddled together amongst the small fish that are sometimes caught by the trawlers, and brought into the market, where they are sold at almost a nominal price to the poor; and we have often obtained an excellent dish of this fish for the smallest amount of money we chose to give. Mrs. Glasse mentions the weevers; but we do not believe they are alluded to in any of the more modern works on the art of cookery.

On the coast of Cornwall the weevers are called bishops. On the Sussex coast the larger species is known by the name of sea-eat; and in Scotland by that of gowdie.

The Red Mullet, or Surmullet.

This is a very beautiful, as well as one of the most delicious productions of the sea. When first caught it is of a delicate rose colour, striped with yellow; but these fine colours fade soon after death. It is sometimes found to reach two pounds, but about half a pound is the most usual weight.

This fish has been held in great esteem from a very early age; and the vast sums the ancient Romans gave for it appear almost in-

eredible. Thus, according to Dryden's translation of Juvenal,—

“The lavish
Six thousand pices for a mullet gave,
A sesterce for each pound ;”

amounting, altogether to the sum of 48*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.* of our money ; whilst, according to Pliny, a consul named Asinius Celer, gave 8000 nummi, or 64*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* modern English currency for a single fish of this kind. Neither did the extravagance of these people end even here ; as, according to Seneca, they were so exceedingly fastidious about the freshness of this fish, that it seemed not enough unless it was put alive into their guest's hand ; and, according to the luxurious habits of those days, rich epicures kept stews in their very eating rooms, so arranged, that the fish could be taken out alive from under the table, and placed upon it ; and he also tells us they took great pleasure in seeing them change their colours when they were dying. Pennant also informs us that Apicius, of renowned gastronomic memory, invented a method of suffocating these fishes in the *garum sociorum*, or famous Carthaginian pickle, and afterwards making a rich sauce of their livers.

Independently of their extreme delicacy of

flavour, they are celebrated for the delicious taste of their livers, which is the only sauce that should be eaten with them; on which account they are usually dressed without being drawn, in the same manner as woodcocks: but this is an objectionable mode, as the intestines have afterwards to be separated from the livers; which, if not properly done, leads to very disagreeable consequences; besides which, the garbage presents an unsightly appearance. But all this may be avoided by adopting the plan we shall point out when we come to treat of the proper ways to prepare and cook this most excellent of fishes.

Red mullets are in best season during the latter part of summer; and so they continue until the end of the year. The best proof of their freshness is the brightness of their colours and the moisture on the scales; as also the brightness of the eyes and redness of the gills. If they look dry, and are soft about the abdomen, the eyes sunk, and the gills pale, they are stale.

If caught in a trawl they are comparatively worthless, the livers being squeezed up with the intestines, and utterly spoilt. A trawl-caught surmullet may be recognised by having its scales rubbed off. If you see one of these fishes with all its scales on, you are safe, for even if caught in a trawl it has in that case incurred no injury.

The Grey Mullet

Is a totally differently shaped fish from the red, being of a rounded cylindrical form; and has, in terms, more apt than elegant, been compared to that most useful article a rolling pin. It is of a leaden-grey colour on the back, the sides and belly being silvery. As its food consists chiefly of marine vegetables and small insects it collects from the mud, it frequently acquires a muddy taint, particularly if not gutted soon after it is caught; so that if cooked without being drawn, and dressed like a surmullet, it would be one of the most nauseous fishes that could be brought to table; and yet, if cooked in a proper manner, it is an exceedingly good fish. The best way of dressing them is by boiling or stewing, and the smaller ones are very good fried. They are also very nice when preserved like pickled salmon, and eaten cold. In the Mediterranean, what is called botargo is made of the roes and milts of these fishes. The materials being taken out, and cleansed, are steeped in salt and water for four or five hours; and being then pressed between two boards or stones, and again washed, is afterwards dried in the sun for about a fortnight, when it is considered sufficiently prepared for use.

The grey mullet grows as large as seven or

eight pounds, and five or six pounds is a very common size. It seems, however, that there is a small species, that seldom exceeds a pound weight, and which may be distinguished from the larger kinds by the extreme protuberance of its fleshy lips; but there does not appear to be any difference in flavour between one of these fishes and one of the same size of the other species.

The Sea-Bream

Is a very deep-bodied fish, with a remarkably vertical profile; it has large scales, and very large eyes, and just behind the gill-cover it is marked with a dusky spot similar to that upon a haddock. The upper part is of a pale brown, with a slight pinkish cast tinged with grey, growing silvery towards the lower parts, which are white. The smaller breams are called chads. The latter are of a greyer cast than the full-grown fishes, and do not acquire the reddish tinge until they are somewhat advanced in size.

The full-grown fishes are often met with weighing as much as three pounds; and sometimes reach to as much as five pounds weight. They are in best season during the summer and autumn months, and are remarkably plentiful on many parts of our coast, particularly upon those of Devonshire and Cornwall; in the neighbour-

hood of which they are sold at a remarkably cheap rate.

The best way of cooking them is by stewing; when, if well done, they are quite equal to any fresh-water earp, which, when prepared in this manner, they very closely resemble in flavour. They are also very good baked with a foremeat pudding in their bellies. They may also be cooked in the same way as we shall hereafter point out for dressing surmullet; and in that form afford so good an imitation of the latter fish, that few persons who are not good judges of fish would detect the difference. They also make a very good fish-pie. The chads, or young fish, are very nice marinated; and when potted in the way we shall hereafter point out, may be made nearly, if not quite, equal to potted ehar.

It is, however, a fish that does not keep well, and ought to be gutted soon after it is taken. Another disadvantage it possesses is, that it does not take salt well; consequently, it is next to useless to attempt to preserve it in that manner.

The brightness of the eyes and colours, and transparency of the slime, denote it to be fresh; when stale, it looks dull, and becomes soft and discoloured about the abdomen.

The Ray, or Gilt-Head,

Is a fish resembling the bream, from which it is distinguishable by the singular form of the profile, which is nearly vertical; as also in the form of the tail-fin, which is shaped like a crescent; and by wanting the dusky spot behind the gill-covers. It is of a larger size than the bream, and possesses a delicious flavour; but, unfortunately, is rather a scarce fish upon our coasts.

The Becker, or Braise,

Also very closely resembles a bream; but, like the fish last mentioned, does not possess those dusky spots which are peculiar to the former fish. Its body is of a longer make, and the profile less vertical than that of the bream, and its colours are brighter. It is also, when full grown, rather a larger fish; and is considered to possess a superior flavour. It comes in season at the same time as the bream, and may be cooked in precisely the same manner. Although not a scarce fish, it is by no means so common as the bream.

The Black Bream

Is a fish of about the same size and shape as the common bream; but rather deeper-bodied, the back being remarkably elevated, and the profile

exceeding vertical. The colour varies, in different specimens, from a dusky, slaty hue, to almost blackness; the sides are paler, and when the fish is caught of almost a silver hue; but, after the fish has been a short time out of water, it acquires a darker tint. It is about the same size as the bream, but is a fatter fish, and possesses a richer flavour. It may be cooked in the same way as the bream, and its freshness may be tested in the same manner.

It is somewhat strange that, although this fish is by no means scarce upon our coasts during the latter part of the summer and throughout the whole of the autumn months, yet none of the fry, or a fish of the kind under a pound weight, is ever met with.

Wrasses.

There are no less than nine varieties of this fish upon our coasts; all of which are so soft, watery, and insipid, that not all the art of cookery can convert them into a good dish of fish. The best way of turning them to account is to split them, powder them well with pepper and salt, and broil them, rubbing in plenty of butter.

Upon the whole, however, they are more required to be known to be avoided, than to be selected for any culinary purpose whatever.

The ballan-wrasse, the largest of the tribe, sometimes attains to as much as eight or nine pounds weight, and four or five pounds is a common size. In general appearance this fish resembles a fresh-water earp; but is remarkable for possessing large flexible lips, which, turning upwards, disclose two rows of teeth, rather resembling those of terrestrial animals than fishes. Most of the other kinds are small, and do not generally exceed half a pound weight; but some of them are remarkable for the beauty of their colours; still all seem alike bad, as far as their edible qualities are concerned.

Gurnards.

These fishes, of which we possess five distinct species, are all of them good and wholesome; and, fortunately, they are distributed in tolerable abundance upon most parts of our coasts. All these fish closely resemble one another in flavour, as well as form; their flesh is white, exceedingly sweet and firm, and shells out into snowy flakes; and, what is highly advantageous, they keep exceedingly well without the assistance of salt, and, if required, will take the salt very nicely, and may be easily preserved by that means. Of these,

The Tubfish

Is the largest in size, attaining to the weight of nine or ten pounds, but commonly ranging from about a pound to five pounds weight. Like the rest of the gurnard tribe, this fish has a large head, wide at the top, and sloping gradually towards the nose; the cheeks being armed with strong, bony plates. The body, which is thickest about the shoulders, tapers away gradually, and becomes very slender towards the tail. The tubfish is brown upon the back, red on the sides, with a golden east below, the belly being of a snowy whiteness. This fish is remarkable for the size and beauty of its pectoral fin, which expands like a fan; being of a greenish brown, edged with deep blue, the effect of which is entirely lost when the fin lies folded up like an old umbrella on the fish-stalls.

The best criterion of good season in this fish, and the same rule is equally applicable to the whole tribe, is the thickness of the body, and the brilliancy of the colours; the latter of which, as well as the redness of the gills, affording the best possible proof of their freshness. If the gills are dry and pale, and the eyes dim and sunk, the fish is stale.

From its superiority in size, and the abundance with which it is supplied, the tubfish may be con-

sidered the most valuable of the whole of the gurnard tribe. It is capable of being cooked in a great many ways. It is exceedingly good plain-boiled; and presents a very attractive appearance when prepared in that manner, from the snowy whiteness of its flakes. It is also very good either split and fried, or cut up in quarters, being well-coated with egg and bread-crumbs. It also makes a nice dish either stewed, or baked with a fore-neat pudding in its belly. It is not, however, considered equal in flavour to the piper; but which we are inclined to think rather proceeds from the greater scarcity of the latter fish. We have often partaken at the same time of tubfish and pipers, both kinds of which have been cooked in the same manner, and served up at the same time, and we could never detect any difference whatever in flavour between the two fishes; which, after all, is no ill compliment to the piper, the tubfish being in reality so good a fish that even to equal it is no small merit. Tubfish may be found in good order at all times of the year; but, as there is a great difference between fishes of this kind, great care will be required in the selection.

The Piper.

This fish, although it does not attain so large a size as the tubfish, is sometimes met with weighing as much as two pounds, though usually from three-quarters to a pound and a half; which is about double the average weight of most of the other gurnards, with the exception of the tubfish, and with this exception the piper may fairly be ranked as the second best-sized fish of the whole tribe.

It is of a reddish pink cast on the upper side, the belly snowy white. But, besides its colour, it is of a more slender make than the tubfish; for, although tolerably stout about the shoulders, it tapers away very remarkably towards the tail. This fish may always be recognised by the singular formation of its snout, which is armed with two broad, cloven plates, with a sharp spine at the end,—a very formidable, offensive weapon.

The piper, like the tubfish, may generally be met with in good season all the year through; the best proof of which is the stoutness about the shoulders.

The Red Gurnard.

This fish does not usually attain to more than half the size of the piper; from which it may be distinguished by wanting the cloven plates on

the snout. The upper part is also a deeper and more decided red. It resembles the two last in flavour, and its goodness may be tested in the same manner.

The Red Alick

Is even a smaller fish than the one last described, as it seldom exceeds half a pound weight; the greater number being no more than a quarter of a pound. They are elegantly formed little fishes, having a smaller head than others of the gurnard tribe; which, with a remarkably vertical profile and large bright eyes, gives them a very quaint and pleasing appearance. They are of a deeper and duller cast of red than the red gurnard, and their sides are streaked with minute, dark-brown spots. Some specimens are found having the upper sides of the same olive-brown cast as in the tubfish. They are also remarkable for the extreme roughness of the lateral line.

These fish are sold indiscriminately, under the name of red gurnards, with the true fish of that name, both kinds being usually exposed for sale at the same time in the fish-markets. Nor do the generality of persons detect any difference between the two fishes; though this is obvious enough to the practised eye. But there is a still greater dif-

ference in the flavour; the flesh of the red alick being much more dry than any of the other gurnards; which some object to in this fish, whilst others esteem it the more highly for that very reason. It has also another recommendation, that you seldom find one of these fishes that is not in good order; which is not the case with any of the rest of the gurnards.

The Grey Gurnard

Is met with from half a pound to a pound and a half in weight. It may be distinguished from all the rest of its tribe by the greyish colour of its upper side. It is not so highly esteemed as the rest of the gurnards; but is, nevertheless, a very good and wholesome fish. It does not, however, come into season so early as its congeners, being seldom found in good order before September; from whence it continues in season until the spring. But at all times a number of these fish may be met with that are in a thin and emaciated condition, and these should always be rejected. The proof of good condition is the fulness of the body, and a bright coppery tinge upon the sides. Its freshness is tested in the same way as the rest of its tribe.

SECTION XII.

CARTILAGINOUS FISHES.

Cartilaginous fishes are so described on account of having their museles supported by cartilages instead of bones, to distinguish them from those we have previously been treating of, which are termed osseous, or bony fishes. Cartilaginous fishes are far less numerous than true bony fishes, comprising chiefly the rays, the sturgeon, the lampreys, and the whole shark family.

Fishes of the Ray kind.

Notwithstanding there are no less than twelve distinct species of these fish, the flesh of the whole of them usually passes under the general term of skate, which is the very worst fish of the whole tribe. From the unprepossessing exterior of these fishes, they are less highly esteemed than they deserve; and many persons reject them altogether, for no other reason. Yet what can be more absurd than to refuse a wholesome and delicious article of food because the animal affording it has an unprepossessing exterior? For —

“It is the flavour forms the test of merit ;
 Which, when with wholesome qualities combined,
 Forms the intrinsic value of all food.
 If mere exterior is to elaim the palm,
 Then must the woodeock to the parrot yield,
 The spotted leopard supersede the deer,
 And dories to the blue-striped wrasse give place.
 Yet, is the ermine better than the hare,
 Because its coat bedecks the robes of kings ?

‘ Or is the adder better than the eel

Because its painted skin contents the eye ?’

So, as the mind doth mark the worth of man,
 And not gay clothes, for such a fool can wear,
 Thus for our table should we choose those things
 Whose goodly qualities are there display’d ;
 Nor deem their virtues less, because, forsooth,
 Their raw exterior wears unseemly guise.
 Do not foul ways oft lie through fertile lands
 And richest mines beneath a barren soil ? ”

The best kinds of rays are the thornbaek, and the common, or homelyn ray. The former may be recognised by the body being covered with thorny tubercles, and the homelyn ray may be distinguished from the skate by having the snout less protruded ; that of the latter fish being remarkably long and sharp.

The best portions of all these fishes are the parts surrounding the fins ; which should be cut up and prepared in the manner we shall hereafter point out. It may be cooked either boiled, broiled, fried, or stewed ; and when done in the latter way, very few other fish come up to, or, in fact, will bear a comparison to it ; and yet it is very

rarely dressed in that manner. If any of the stewed fish is left, the flesh, mixed up with the gravy, and converted into sausages, is far superior to every other thing of the kind we have tasted. Few fishes, therefore, could be turned to much greater advantage in a family than a ray, being one of the most nutritious and wholesome fishes we possess, and delicious when properly cooked; added to all which advantages, a few pence may generally obtain a sufficient quantity to supply a plentiful meal for several persons.

In selecting one of these fishes, choose the thickest you can find; and never take a skate, if you can obtain a thornback or a ray.

The way to erimp and prepare them will be noticed hereafter.

These fish keep remarkably well, and, in fact, except in very hot weather, are improved by being kept for a day or two before they are cooked.

Lampreys.

There are three kinds of lampreys—the sea-lamprey, the common lamprey, and the pride; but the last mentioned, being an exceedingly small fish, and of no use, except as bait for catching those of a larger kind, we shall pass it by without further notice. The appearance of

all these fishes is repulsive; not only from their snake-like form and eye, but also from their open, circular mouth, and the seven holes on each side, which serve them as their gills. With respect to their organisation also, they rank amongst the very lowest of the vertebrated animals, not having even a backbone to boast of; the place of which is supplied by a mere gristle, without any processes or protuberances whatever. Yet, ungainly as these fishes may now appear, they were kept as pets by the ancient Romans; for we are informed that Antonia, the wife of Drusus, had a pet lamprey, in whose gills she hung gems and earrings; a species of unnecessary finery the fish, no doubt, would gladly have dispensed with. Licinius Crassus also brought his lampreys, which he kept in a vivarium, to become so tame as to be obedient to his voice, and to come and receive food at his hands; whilst we are also told, that the celebrated orator, Quintus Hortensius, wept at the death of one of these fishes that he had kept long and loved exceedingly.

But as every dog has his day, it seems those of the lampreys have long since passed away, as far as keeping them for pets is concerned; and they are only now esteemed for their real qualities, which are very good ones, being nice

fishes, either potted, stewed, or made up into pies. Still, it seems, they are more agreeable to the palate than wholesome to the body, being apt to create surfeits if eaten in too great quantities. One of our kings (Henry the First) is said to have met with his death in consequence of indulging in a too-plentiful meal of these fishes; and yet, strange to say, this very self-same fatal material, cooked up in a pie, is by ancient custom transmitted annually at Christmas as a token of loyalty by the city of Gloucester to the sovereign of this country; a gift attended both with expense and difficulty; for, on account of the scarcity of these fishes at that particular season of the year, they can hardly be procured at a guinea a-piece.

The greater, or sea-lamprey, sometimes attains to as much as four or five pounds weight. Its body has a curiously mottled appearance, of a rusty red and brown, which, when the fish is in the water, gives it something the appearance of an old, rusty piece of broken iron hoop. The smaller, or river-lamprey, rarely exceeds a foot in length, and in shape and colour resembles a small fresh water eel.

Both these fishes are in their highest state of perfection during the months of April and May; about which time the sea-lamprey comes up from

the salt water into the fresh for the purpose of depositing its spawn; after which, like all other fishes, it becomes out of season. But it is not often met with in this state; for, as soon as it has spawned, it returns again to the sea, where it soon reeruits its exhausted strength.

Sharks.

Although there are no less than fourteen species of sharks to be found upon our coasts, two only, the rough hound or morgay, and the dogfish, are consumed as food; and even the two latter are seldom eaten except in a salted state. The dogfish, when split and dried, we have been assured by every one who has possessed the appetite or courage to partake of it, is a rich and well-tasted fish, resembling very much salmon prepared in the same manner. Dried dogfish, and also morgays, are often exposed for sale in the fish-markets at Penzanee.

The white shark is rarely, though sometimes, seen upon our coasts; but is universally rejected as an article of food by all classes in this country, on account of its propensity for feeding upon human flesh. We have, however, been told by many seafaring persons who have partaken of it, that its flesh is very good, bearing a strong resemblance to veal, both in flavour and appearance.

The Sturgeon.

This, although a fish of most peaceable disposition, bears an external resemblance to the shark race, particularly in the projecting snout and position of the mouth. A sturgeon, from its large size, is sold and cut up in portions in the fish-mongers' shops. It is a rich and well-flavoured fish, and exceedingly useful, from its capacity of being cooked in a great variety of ways. Unfortunately it is a scarce fish in this country, and consequently, when obtained, is sold at a high price. The proof of goodness is, that the flesh should cut clean, and present a white appearance, strongly contrasted with the blueness both of its veins and gristle; a brown or yellowish cast in these parts denotes the fish to be in bad condition.

It is of the hard roe of this fish that caviar is usually composed, although sometimes, as we have previously noticed, it is prepared from the hard roes both of the carp and grey mullet.

SECTION XIII.

AS TO THE CHOICE OF SALT FISH.

The fishes that are usually salted dry, are cod-fish, ling, hake, whiting, and rawlin pollock, silver, whiting, and the torsk or tusk.

Ling, cod, and hake, and, in fact, all other salt fish, ought to appear of a light colour, and present a perfectly dry appearance, free from spot or mildew, but they should not feel hard to the touch. These fish should always be thick and stout, particularly behind the head, and the stoutness should be carried on down to the very tail.

The most esteemed ling are those taken on the coasts of Seilly and Penzance, and also at St. Ives, in Cornwall; but the best cured fish of the kind we have met with have been preserved at Polperro, a fishing station in Cornwall, about ten or twelve miles westward of Plymouth, which are less hard and dry than those prepared at any of the other places we have mentioned.

The codfish taken on the coast of Newfoundland are neither so large nor so good as those cured on the Cornish coast, but they are usually sold at a cheaper rate.

Next to cod and ling, hake may be considered the best salt fish; when cured in the common way, it is termed Poor John, or stock fish. At Plymouth, they have a method of smoking them, in the way of red herrings and dried salmon.

Dried salmon should be thick about the shoulders and deep-bodied throughout; and the flesh, when it is cut, of a deep pink colour, as distinguished from the dim red, which is imparted

by means of saltpetre to a colourless and unhealthy fish; numbers of which are cured in this way, and whose defects are attempted to be disguised in the manner we have just mentioned.

Red herrings should look very bright, and shine like burnished metal, and be thoroughly stiff. If limp, and dull in colour, and soft or broken about the belly-parts, they are not good.

Pilchards should look firm; but these fishes are seldom met with ill cured, although, from their extreme saltiness and strong, oily, rancid taste, few persons, excepting those who have been accustomed to them from early life, can be prevailed upon to eat them.

Fishes kept in pickle should present a clean appearance, and be free from spots or bruises. They should also feel firm and elastic to the touch.

Anchovies should be firm and hard, and the abdomen entire and unbroken; they should also be of a red colour under the skin. If soft and of a brown colour, with the abdomen broken, and the ribs showing through the aperture, they are bad. The smaller ones are considered superior to those of larger size.

SECTION XIV.

HOW TO CHOOSE CRABS, LOBSTERS, AND ALL OTHER KINDS
OF SHELL FISH.

Crabs and Lobsters.

Crabs and lobsters are often purchased alive, and this is usually the wisest course, as by this means you not only insure the freshness of the article, but avoid the possibility of buying any such as may have died a natural death, either in the well-boats, or in the cobbles in which they have been kept. We know that the greater portion of boiled crabs and lobsters with which a large town near one of our great crab and lobster depôts is supplied, consists of those which have died in this manner; and, after a sudden summer flood, the fresh waters of which often prove fatal to the store shell-fish, crabs, lobsters, and crayfish are pretty sure to be cried around the town. If the crier is silent, you may rely upon it the rain has done no mischief to the lobster stores.

The best proof of the goodness of a crab, whether dead or alive, is in the depth of the redness of colour on the upper side, and the clean appearance, and absence of all spots, bruises, or blemishes on the lower side; a dirty, yellowish brown back, and spots, and marks of bruises

about the body and claws, denote a sickly condition.

When boiled, the upper part will be of a deeper red than when it is in a raw state, and there should also be a strong spring or elasticity in the joints of the legs and claws, which, if they hang loosely, show either that the fish is stale, or has died a natural death previously to being boiled.

The female crab is easily recognised from the male by possessing smaller claws, and by having a much wider flapped tail. The former is considered inferior, although those persons who are partial to the cream of a crab give it a preference, and it certainly makes up in cream for what it wants in claws.

It is a good rule to choose both crabs and lobsters by weight, those that are the heaviest being always the best.

Crabs and lobsters both come into season at the same time that oysters go out, and may be considered in their best order from April until October.

In choosing a lobster: if it be alive, select one whose shell is hard and firm, whose coat looks dark, and bears evidence of having been a long time worn, as an old outside denotes a sound interior. The male is known from the female, not

only by wanting the roe which is generally found adhering to the belly of the latter, but by possessing much larger claws, and having a narrower tail, which is stiff and hard; that of the female being broad and soft. The female is in best order just as the rudiments of roe first make their appearance, at which time a rich coral will be found in the head, which disappears as the eggs increase in size. Many persons, however, give a preference to the male, or cock lobster, as possessing flesh of a more firm and delicate flavour, and as presenting also a more pleasing appearance to the eye.

The best way of testing the freshness of a boiled lobster is to try the spring of the tail, which is strong and elastic if the fish be fresh; but slack and loose, it is either stale, or, like a crab exhibiting the same symptoms, has died a natural death previous to its cooking. Press the cheeks, and if they yield readily to the pressure, the fish is in bad order; if they feel hard and resist the pressure, it is in good condition.

There are two species of crayfish, the one being found in the fresh water, and the other in the sea. The former is of very small size, not being much more than double the size of a large prawn. The sea crayfish attains a considerable bulk, being at least twice as heavy as the largest lobster. The

smaller species has claws like a lobster, but not so large in proportion to the rest of the body; the sea crayfish has no large claws, but possesses slender legs, with a small kind of forceps at the extremity, with which it can give a very severe pinch. Both species resemble a lobster, but do not come up to it in flavour; the smaller being more insipid, and the latter rather too tough and wanting the exquisite richness of flavour for which the lobster is so pre-eminently distinguished. Still, crayfish are by no means to be despised, and when lobsters cannot conveniently be procured, they act very well as substitutes.

Their goodness and freshness is tested in the same way as with lobsters.

Prawns and Shrimps.

Prawns and shrimps are in best order when the females are in roe, the latter being, in fact, the most delicious part of them. When boiled, if they are elastic and spring back upon being pulled by the tails, and the flesh is moist within the shells, well filled out, they are fresh; if dry, tough, and shrunk up, they are stale; and if soft, slender, and watery, they are in bad condition.

A great deal of the qualities of both shrimps and prawns depends upon the care bestowed upon the boiling of them, which we shall give proper directions about hereafter.

Oysters.

The goodness of oysters depends chiefly upon the nature of the ground from which they have been taken ; and it is from the particular quality of the ground that the Colchester oysters derive the goodness for which they have been so long and justly celebrated. In some bottoms that are affected by minerals, the oysters not only acquire a disagreeable taint, but become so unwholesome as to be absolutely poisonous ; as is the case with the oysters caught in Falmouth harbour ; and yet, by being removed to more healthy ground, they soon become purified, acquire a good flavour, and lose all their pernicious qualities. In other grounds the oysters, although not actually unwholesome, are thin and ill-tasted, but the latter defects may be cured by cleansing and feeding the oysters for a week, or even a lesser time, in the manner we shall by and by point out.

There is an old and a very true saying, that oysters are always in season as long as there is an R in the month.

Mussels and Cockles.

These should be full in the shell, and look clean and free from mud. Cockles, if taken from a muddy ground, should be kept for three or four days in clear salt water.

*How to preserve and cleanse Oysters, Mussels,
and Cockles.*

The best mode of cleansing and fattening oysters, is to place them flat on their sides in a pan, with enough water not only to cover them, but also to fill up the pan nearly to the brim. Salt water is best adapted to the purpose, but if you can only procure fresh water, then you should throw in a little salt proportioned to the size of the vessel, but taking care not to over do it, as too much salt will injure if not kill the oysters. The water should be changed once every day, and as soon as fresh water is put in, cast in a handful or two of flour, barley, or oatmeal, to which may be added about the same quantity of wheaten bran. By adopting this plan, you will find a considerable improvement even in the course of a couple of days, and by the expiration of five or six days they will become perfectly fat, in which state, with care, they may be kept for upwards of a fort-

night; but after being kept over a week they are rather more apt to decline than improve in condition. The shells should also be carefully examined every day, and if any are found to remain constantly open, they should be at once removed, as the oyster is then either dead or in a dying state; and, if allowed to remain, will prove injurious to the health of the rest. A cool cellar is the best place to keep them in.

Mussels and cockles should be kept in clean water—salt is the best—in the same manner as oysters, and the water changed once or twice. They should be so kept for a day at least before they are used, for the purpose of cleansing them from the sand, mud, and other impurities usually found in shellfish of this kind when first taken up from their beds at the bottom; but it is not necessary to feed them, unless you wish to preserve them for any length of time.

In choosing mussels, those which are of a deep colour and very sharp at the edges are generally the most tender and best flavoured; those that are of a slate colour, or bluish cast, and rough and worn at the edges, are generally hard and tough.

Cockles that have the whitest shells are generally the best, being usually found in clean sandy

ground, and therefore free from the muddy taint which often renders cockles so unpalatable; they will, however, require longer cleansing when taken from a sandy than a muddy bottom, in order to free them thoroughly from the sand, which, until they are entirely free from it, is as disagreeable in its way as the muddy taint we have already alluded to.

CHAP. III.

OF CLEANING AND PRESERVING FISH, AND PREPARING
IT FOR THE TABLE.

The cleaning of fish is a very important matter, but, being a disagreeable office, is often entrusted to unskilful hands, who execute their task so negligently, that almost as many fish are injured by this process as by bad cookery. The chief thing to be attended to, is to cleanse away every offensive particle, and not to maul about or handle the fish in such a way as to deprive it of its stiffness, which, if lost, will destroy a great portion of its firmness. Another thing is to do the thing in the right way ; for it must be remembered that different kinds of fishes require to be cleansed in a particular manner, and that what may be proper for one will be exceedingly detrimental to another. Some require to be opened by the belly, others by the back ; in some, the intestines are drawn out by the gills, without the fish being split open at all ; and in a few, the intestines are allowed to remain altogether ; others are cooked with the scales on,

being merely wiped with a dry cloth to rub off the external slime. Again, some require not only to be scaled, but also to be skinned, either wholly or partially,—as eels, scate, and soles; whilst others require scalding for the purpose of assisting in getting off their skins, or cleansing them from the strong slime with which their bodies are coated.

In cleansing fish, a pump or cock of running water is very advantageous, as the force of the running water washes out everything that is necessary without that pawing about, and rubbing or scrubbing, which proves so detrimental to the firmness of the fish.

As a general rule for cleaning most kinds of fish, having dipped the fish in water, lay it flat on its side, either on a board or a flat stone, keeping it in a firm position by grasping it with one hand about the head and shoulders, whilst with the other, by the aid of a knife, you scrape off all the scales and slime, taking especial care not to cut, break, or bruise the skin of the fish. Having cleansed one side, turn over the fish, and do the like with the other; then cut off the fins and wash the fish just enough to clear it of any slime or loose scales that may still adhere to it; then open the fish, if it is one that is required to be opened by the belly, by cutting it open in the middle with a sharp knife to a little below the

vent; then extract the gills and intestines, taking care not to break or bruise the roes, if any, as also the liver, when either of the latter are intended to be preserved and eaten with the fish; and be careful to scrape and wash out all the blood that lodges about the backbone; then wash the fish quickly, but thoroughly, handling it as little as possible; and as soon as this process is completed, take it out of the water and hang it up by the head, to allow the water to drain off, and do not leave it one moment in the water after the washing is complete, as by so doing the flavour and firmness will often be materially injured.

All the eod tribe require great care, particularly in cleansing the back bone from the blood, which, if allowed to remain, turns black when the fish is cooked, and presents a very disgusting appearance. To prevent this, all this tribe, from their peculiar formation, require to be cut open for some distance down below the vent; the sound should be carefully separated with a sharp knife close to the back bone, on one side only, leaving it attached to the opposite side, and then the blood on the interstices of the back bone can be reached so as to permit the blood to be scraped out either with the point of a knife, or a small brush.

In preparing hakes, it is a frequent practice to

extract the back bone, which can be drawn out quite clear from the fish without any portion of the flesh adhering to it, but which we do not believe can be done with any other species of fish. The way it is managed is, after opening the fish by the belly and disembowelling it, to insert the finger and thumb of the right hand betwixt the vertebræ, just behind the head, and forcing them onward by the edge of the bone down the whole length of the body as far as the fish is opened, it by that means is drawn out entire, and quite free from the flesh.

In cleaning turbot, flounders, and all fish of that kind, it will be necessary that they should be opened considerably below the vent, otherwise it is difficult to extract the whole of the intestines, and impossible to cleanse the entire cavity of the body properly ; and from neglect of this kind it is that flat fish are so often found to have that unpleasant muddy taint about the abdominal parts.

Before attempting to scale perch, weevers, gurnards, or any kind of fish possessing spines, the latter should always be cut off, to prevent the possibility of a puncture, which is certain to produce painful, and possibly serious, consequences.

Fishes that require to be opened by the back, and which will be duly noticed when we treat of the manner in which each particular kind of

fish is to be cooked, should be split through from nose to tail with a very sharp knife, so that the flesh may be cut clean and without being jagged close to the back bone; the belly being left entire, and the fish thus spread open. This mode of preparation is well adapted to some particular kinds of fish when designed for either broiling or frying, such as salmon peel, mackerel, garfish, eod, whiting, and fish of the like kind; as by that means the rich fat portion about the belly part is preserved, which would be in great measure lost if the fish was opened by the belly in the usual way. When opened by the back, also, the form of the fish is better suited to either the gridiron or the frying-pan, than when prepared in any other way.

Opening by the back is also an excellent plan when fish are intended to be regularly salted in to keep; as not only is the salt more easily applied, but the parts about the belly, which would otherwise become too dry and hard, by the above process become the best portions of the fish.

Sprats, sand-launces, and many other very small fishes, are best cleaned by cutting off the head just below the collar bones, and at the same time drawing out the intestines with the gills, without ripping open the bodies. This, in the case of sand-launces, may and ought to be done without

drawing out the roes; which, provided the fish possess any, should be allowed to remain, and be dressed in their bodies. As the scales and slime of all the last-mentioned fish come off very readily, they should be merely rubbed off with a dry cloth, rubbing upwards, and not attempting to scrape them off with a knife.

Fishes that are intended to be dressed with their scales on ought to retain them entire and unruffled, as the object of permitting them to remain is to prevent the moisture and rich juices of the fish from exuding and wasting away in the cookery. For this reason pilehards, when intended to be dressed with their scales on, must not even be wiped with a cloth, but must be cooked exactly in the same state they are taken out of the nets, as the slightest rubbing would instantaneously detach every scale from their bodies. Other fishes whose external scaly covering is of a more enduring nature, as the bream and surmullet, may be rubbed gently from the head downwards, but this, particularly with the latter fish, must be very tenderly done.

Flounders, although a soft and watery fish, may be made to eat more dry and firm by adopting the proper plan of cleaning them. To manage this, get your flounders as fresh as you possibly can. If they be alive, kill them, either by breaking

open their throats, or knocking them on the head; and as soon as they are dead, cut off the tail and back and anal fins close to the body; then gut the fish, and hang them up by the head, when a considerable quantity of slimy water will exude from them. On the following morning skin the fish, either on both sides, or on the dark side only, and, washing off all the mucous slime, hang them up again in the wind and air, so that they may get thoroughly dry; then cut them in pieces, and, coating them well with egg and bread-crumbs, fry them carefully, and they will make a delicious dish of fish.

Soles are usually skinned on the dark side only; the pale side requires to be carefully sealed, which is often very negligently done, and that side of the fish all but spoilt in consequence, as few things we meet with at table are more disgusting than a mouthful of fish scales. A small portion of the dark skin of the sole, dried and preserved, is excellent for fining coffee.

Red mullets are usually dressed without being either sealed or gutted; the object of omitting the latter process being to preserve the livers entire and uninjured: but this may be done, under careful management, without the necessity of retaining the disgusting quantity of garbage and half digested food with which the bodies of these fish are

so fully supplied. This may be contrived by making a cut across the body, just below the gills, through which the garbage and the liver may be drawn, and the latter, after being carefully separated from the offal, can be again introduced through the aperture into the body of the fish. Another way of preserving the livers and getting rid of the superfluous parts, is to gut the fish, and, after wiping out the inside with a cloth, to detach the liver from the garbage, and boil it separately from the fish in a small saucepan; and then, melting your butter in the same liquor the livers were boiled in, mix up the whole together as a sauce to accompany the fish. This we think the best plan of the whole, as the most imperfect livers may by this means be turned to the utmost account, without the possibility of the smallest particle that is really good being wasted in the process of cooking.

Rays, thornbacks, and the whole of that class of fishes, should be skinned: this is best done immediately after the fish is killed, which may be managed by dividing the spine behind the head, and stripping off the skin immediately afterwards, when it will come off more readily than when the fish has been some time dead. Another plan of preparing a ray is to cut off the tail close to the body, and to cut round the edges of the fins, and

then hang up the fish by the head, when a great quantity of watery slime will drain from it; and if the skin does not come off readily the skinning process may be accelerated by scalding the fish in boiling water. The best parts are the fins, the cartilages of which should be cut across with a sharp knife into strips of about an inch or so in width. The other parts may be cut up in small pieces. When cut up, the pieces should be thrown into strong salt and water, and kept there for some hours, or even a day or more, before they are dressed, which will extract every rank taint, and impart a more white and delicate appearance to the flesh.

Eels should be skinned before they are dressed. This must be done whilst they are quite fresh, otherwise the skins do not come off so readily; but it is as unnecessary as cruel to skin them whilst alive, for the skins come off quite as easily when the fish is recently dead as when the barbarous proceeding above alluded to is practised. The way to kill eels speedily we have already pointed out. To skin these fish in the most easy manner you should first cut just through the skin all around the body below the gill apertures; then stick a strong skewer or the prong of a stout steel fork through the head above, and, holding on by that part with one hand, take a

coarse towel in the other, and, grasping the fish tightly just below the part where you have cut through the skin, drawing your hand hard downwards, you may strip it off entire, as you would a stocking.

We understand it is a common practice in Ireland merely to rub off the slime, and to cook the eels without depriving them of their skins. We ourselves once partook of eels so prepared; but this occurred merely through the ignorance or carelessness of the cook; which, combined with exceedingly bad cookery in every other respect, produced so nauseous a mess, that nothing short of the perils of absolute starvation could induce us again to venture upon a dish of eels prepared in that manner. But congers should never be skinned before they are cooked, and, as they have little slime on their bodies, they may easily be scraped clean. In fact, the skin of the conger is exceedingly rich, and adds much to the delicacy of the flavour of these truly excellent fishes.

Salt fish requires attention in being properly soaked in water previously to being dressed; and it is from inattention to this very important matter that salt fish is usually found so over-salt, hard, and disagreeable, which renders it a less favourite article of food than it would be if proper

care and attention was paid in preparing it for cookery.

To prepare a salt fish—a ling, for example, which is by far the best of all fish that can be cured in this manner,—it should lie for six or eight hours at least in a sufficient quantity of fresh water to cover it entirely; being then taken out, it should be scrubbed with a hard brush or a coarse cloth, placed on a clean stone or flat board, and then allowed to drain for six or eight hours more. After this, it should again be placed in water, which, if it can be kept about lukewarm, will be all the better; and there it should be suffered to continue for ten or twelve hours, when it will be found to swell considerably, and also to have become pliant and tender. Warm milk-and-water is considered to soften and improve both the flavour and appearance of the fish. Some persons add vinegar to the water as a means of extracting the salt. Two soakings and one draining are indispensable to render the fish fit for cooking; one soaking, for however long a time (which, by the way, is all the salt fish usually gets), only makes a kind of pickle, in which, as long as the fish remains, it gets rid of very little of its original saltiness.

Dried cod may be prepared in the same manner as ling; and it must also be observed that the

smaller fish of either kind do not require to remain so long a time in the water upon each soaking as those of large size.

Dried salmon does not require much soaking. In fact, an hour in lukewarm water, or even less, if the fish be not very thick through, will be quite sufficient, and if allowed to remain much longer, the flavour will be impaired. After being taken out of the water, it should be allowed to drain for half an hour, or perhaps a short time longer, before it is dressed. One soaking only will be required.

Red herrings and anchovies should be merely washed in hot water before they are dressed, the former being allowed to remain in it for about three or four minutes afterwards; but the latter should be taken out immediately after they have been thoroughly washed and scraped.

Red herrings are sometimes prepared by being steeped in boiling beer, in which they are allowed to remain until the liquid becomes cold.

SECTION II.

HOW TO CURE AND PRESERVE FISH.

The business of preserving salt fish usually devolves upon fish-curers residing at the stations

where the fish are captured; but we consider it may not be altogether superfluous, in a work of this kind, to point out the various modes in which it may be done, for the convenience of any of our readers who may feel inclined to put them into practice.

When the fish are only intended to be preserved for a few days before they are dressed, then, if the weather be cool, merely a slight sprinkling of salt will be a better plan than throwing the fish into a strong pickle, which will soon destroy the curdy appearance of the flakes, whilst the strength of the salt will extract a great portion of its true flavour. If the fish is to be kept over more than one day, all the salt should be washed off on the second day, and fresh salt sprinkled over it; this will prevent a tainted taste, which will otherwise be imparted to it, particularly when the fish is allowed to lie flat on its side in a dish. To prevent this, where fish are intended to be kept only for a day or two, and the weather is cool, it is a good plan to take out the eyes and fill up the apertures with salt, rubbing at the same time a small quantity over the rest of the fish, particularly the inside and the interstices about the backbone. Having done this, the fish should be hung up by the head in a cool place. If the weather is at all warm, it will be

advisable to make an incision on one side of the backbone, from the very junction of the head to the body down nearly to the tail, and fill up the aperture with salt; for it is always about the backbone that the fish becomes first tainted; so that, if the weather is very unfavourable for keeping fish, the safest plan will be to cut out the backbone altogether and fill in plenty of salt in its place.

In cool weather, if you wish to avoid imparting too much saltiness to your fish, you may call in the aid of pepper, and thus render less salt necessary. This is particularly well adapted to fish that are intended for broiling; and you may also add a little ground mace or allspice.

If you are desirous of keeping your fish for any length of time, so as to preserve its original flavour untainted with saltiness, the best plan is partially to dress in a way suited to the mode in which it is to be finally prepared for the table. If simply to be boiled or fried, then the fish may be about half-done in either of those modes; and if intended for stewing or currie, then the frying part of the process may be previously gone through; and by this means, in mild weather, the fish may be kept good for two or three days without the aid of salt or other mode of preservation than that we have recommended.

Parboiling salmon soon after it is caught is an

excellent way of preserving its curdy flakes, when you find it desirable to keep it for several days before it is finally cooked for the table. Another way of preserving salmon without the aid of salt, the latter of which is considered to extraet much of the richness of its taste, is to hang it up in a cool place, wash out the inside every day with vinegar, and afterwards to throw a quantity of pepper over the same parts.

When fish are intended to be regularly salted in and preserved for a length of time, considerable attention will be required in every stage of the proceeding, as a slight neglect in any one of them may render all the others unavailing. The fish usually prepared in this manner are ling, eod, hake, pollock, whiting, and the torsk, and gurnards of all sorts and kinds, as also herrings, pilehards, and sprats; salmon and salmon-peel may be cured in this manner. In the western parts of Cornwall dogfish and morgays, and mackerel, are preserved as salt fish, besides rays of every sort and description. The latter kind of fish are first well scrubbed, to get off the slime, and are then immersed in a strong pickle of brine; in which they are kept for ten days or a fortnight. They are then taken out, and submitted to a second scrubbing and pickling; and, after remaining about four or five days more in the

piekle, are hung up to dry in sheds, being exposed to the open air and sun whenever the opportunity permits. Gurnards are also eured in precisely the same manner. The latter are also very good when smoked like red-herrings. We once tried rubbing the prepared smoking liquid over these fishes when dried and salted, and found them excellent.

Ling, eod, hake, and the rest of the eod tribe are split open by the baek; and the intestines being extraeted, they are immersed in pickle for about ten days or a fortnight. They are then taken out, and, being well rubbed with dry salt, are hung out to dry, a small stiek being thrust through them, as we see in the careases of sheep, pigs, and oxen, to keep the body of the fish in a proper position; as well for the purpose of giving it a good appearanee as to plaec it in the most favourable form for drying.

But this drying process is a very tedious one; for, before it is thoroughly eompleted, the fish require frequent exposure to the sun and air; and if a violent shower of rain eomes on before they can be eollected and put in a place of shelter, they sustain considerable injury; and are spoilt altogether if allowed to remain until the rain has thoroughly saturated them.

When salmon, or any of the salmon tribe, are

salted, it is an improvement to make the pickle with equal portions of salt and saltpetre. Hake are also cured in the same way, when they are intended to be smoked as well as dried. This smoking process is a great improvement to salted hake, as it also is to all the salmon tribe; and may be done in the same way as hams or bacon.

When fish are kept in pickle only, they should be taken out after they have been a week or ten days in the brine, and be thoroughly washed — pumping over it is the best way; and new pickle being made, the fish should be cast into it, and there allowed to remain until required for use. When wanted for the table, they should be watered and drained, for the purpose of extracting the salt, in the same manner as dried salt fish. Keeping fish in pickle improves the colour, or rather preserves it better than when the fish is thoroughly dried; but if kept for any great length of time, it is difficult to extract the excessive saltiness which it imbibes there.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE COOKERY OF FISH.

AND now we enter upon the most important portion of our subject, which is the actual cookery of fish in all its various branches; as boiling, frying, broiling, stewing, curries, roasting and baking in every sort of way, pies, patties, soups, potting, pickling and marinating, and, in short, every device and contrivance that gastronomic ingenuity has invented for the purpose of turning this valuable commodity to the most advantageous purposes. These different modes we purpose treating of in the same order which we have here laid down; and although, by dint of mere instructions, we cannot hope to make a perfect cook, we still trust the instructions we shall be enabled to give will show how every kind of fish may be rendered most available, and how a vast number of fishes, all easily procured, but hitherto neglected, may be converted into most useful articles of food, and even of actual luxury, at a lower rate

than we can procure the most common and coarsest kinds of food.

SECTION I.

HOW TO BOIL FISH.

Boiling, although apparently so simple a process, is one by which, through carelessness and inattention, more fish are spoilt outright than by any mode of cookery whatever. What, indeed, can be more unsightly or more unpalatable than fish sent to table a mere mass of rags and tatters, except what may also be just as often seen, a fish produced half-raw; and, in addition to both these defects, covered with the scum of the boiler, or half-deluged in water, for want of a fish-drain upon the dish, or from the slovenly manner in which it has been dished up?

One great cause why fish are so often badly boiled is, that they are merely cast into a kettle, and there allowed to remain until they are considered sufficiently cooked, without any consideration as to the rate at which the water is boiling.

To boil a fish of any considerable size in a proper manner, it should be put into cold water; and as soon as it begins to boil strongly, its force

should be instantly checked, either by throwing in a small quantity of cold water, or removing the kettle from too close a contact with the fire; which must be continued from time to time, so that the water may only boil gently, until every portion of the fish is thoroughly dressed. If allowed to boil away fiercely, the skin would be split, and the outer portion overdone, while the parts near the backbone would be utterly raw. Care also must be taken to keep the kettle covered, lest soot or any other dirt should fall into it, and the cover merely taken off from time to time for the purpose of removing any scum that may have arisen upon the surface.

Small, tender fish, such as whiting and codlings for instance, should not be put in until the water boils; but in all other respects the process should be conducted in the same way as with fish of a more bulky size and solid nature.

When the fish is done enough, the fish-plate should be lifted up gently; then, holding it over the kettle, allow the water to drain off; which being done, place the fish on a fish-drain or upon a clean napkin, taking care not to do so as long as a drop of water continues to flow from it. Do not dish it up, however, until the moment before it is to be sent to table; for although it may be kept warm for a considerable time under a cover,

the damp arising from the steam will counteract in a considerable degree the good effect of your placing the fish dry upon the dish, and if circumstances prevent you from being able to send the fish to table as soon as it is done, then the best way to keep it warm is to allow it to remain on the tin plate, which must be placed across the top of the kettle, the upper side of the fish being covered up with a clean cloth.

Salt, vinegar, and horseradish thrown into the water in which the fish is boiled is very good, not only for improving its flavour, but also preserving its appearance, by preventing the skin from breaking.

How to boil a Cod's Head and Shoulders.

A large cod should never be boiled entire; as the part near the tail being much thinner than about the shoulders, the former portion would be overdone before the thicker part would be much more than half-cooked. For this reason, therefore, the fish should always be dressed in portions. The head extremity, being the part most esteemed, is usually made the company dish.

In order that it may be properly boiled, the head and shoulders should be bound with broad tape three or four times round before the fish is committed to the kettle, for the purpose of pre-

venting the cheeks from breaking away, as they are otherwise apt to do; the kettle should contain sufficient cold water to cover the fish, and to this should be added a handful of salt, a bundle of sweet herbs, a couple of wine-glasses of vinegar, and a little shred horseradish. When the water boils, it must be checked in the manner before directed*, and kept boiling gently, until it is done enough. A moderate sized head and shoulders will take about half an hour.

You may ascertain whether or not the fish is sufficiently done by inserting a fish-slice at the backbone, when, if you can raise the flesh clear off it, and it appears white and done, the fish is ready for the table. Cod, if crimped, will take a shorter time than if dressed in a solid piece. When you take up the fish, unwind the tape carefully, so that none of the skin may be broken, and dish up the fish according to the directions we have previously laid down. If you intend to dress either the spawn or the liver, it must not be done in the body of the fish, but be placed alongside it in the kettle, where, if it be at all large, it must remain for a short time after the fish is taken up; for it takes a longer time to become thoroughly done than the fish itself, and hence it is that we so often see the middle part of a roe

* See page 159.

sent to table in a half raw state. Garnish with seraped horseradish, and place the roes and liver by the side. If the fish has a soft roe, it should be fried instead of boiled.

Oyster sauce is the proper accompaniment to a boiled eod's head and shoulders; next come cockle sauce, shrimp, crab, lobster, Cornubian sauce, or anchovy; although there is no kind of fish sauce that may not be eaten with it. Mustard, with plain melted butter, is also well suited to it, and, indeed, mustard mixed with most kinds of sauces is found to give them an improved flavour.

Codlings may be boiled entire. Previously to cooking the latter, it is a good plan to take out their eyes and fill up the sockets with salt, as they become more firm and flake out better when powdered with salt for a day or two before they are eaten, than they will be found to do when cooked perfectly fresh.

To boil Ling.

Ling may be boiled in exactly the same way as a eod; but as the skin of the former is more firm than that of a cod, it is unnecessary to bind up the cheeks in the manner we have directed for the latter. There is also this difference between the tail portion of a eod and a ling, that the latter will take as long to be thoroughly boiled as the head and shoulders of the fish, there not being

that disproportion of the solidity of those parts as in the eodfish. Boiled ling should be accompanied with the same sauces as eodfish, and be garnished and served up in the same manner. The tail portion of the ling is considered superior to the head, or any other part; and the nearer the extremity of the tail, the more agreeable is the flavour.

To boil Pollacks, Hakes, Haddocks, and Whiting.

These fish, if not very large, may be boiled entire. They do not take so long in boiling as a eod or ling of the same weight, and should be placed in boiling instead of cold water; but they must be kept boiling gently. They may all be eaten with the same sauces as the eod; but mustard mixed up with melted butter is particularly well adapted for whiting, and can only be exceeded by Cornubian sauce; some of the latter being mixed up with the mustard.

To boil Cods' Sounds and Tongues.

Previously to the boiling, the tongues and sounds must be steeped for three or four hours in warm milk and water, and then thoroughly scraped and cleansed. After this, they must be put into a saucepan, with fresh milk and water, in which they should boil very gently until they

become tender; and when done, they should be served up accompanied with egg sauce. Mustard or Cornubian sauce are the best accompaniments. You may garnish either with scraped horseradish or boiled parsnips. The horseradish, and also the egg sauce is sometimes strewed over the sounds and tongues.

To boil Salt Cod, Ling, or any other kind of Salt Fish.

The fish, after being well watered and drained, pursuant to our previous directions*, should be boiled very slowly in water into which a wine-glass of vinegar and some shred horseradish should be cast. The fish must be put into cold and not boiling water, and boiled in all respects in the same way as we have directed a fresh cod to be done.† It should be served up with egg sauce, mustard, and plain melted butter, and may be garnished in the same manner, with shred horseradish or boiled parsnips, as with cods' sounds and tongues.

To boil Salmon.

Salmon, if large, should be boiled in portions, like a codfish; if small, it may be dressed entire, and this is best done by fixing the tail in the

* See page 149.

† See page 161.

mouth by means of a skewer, and boiling it in a turbot-kettle; the fish being sent up to table resting on its belly, with the back uppermost. The spawn and liver may be placed beside it on the same dish. The salmon, like the eod, if dressed in a large piece and unerimped, should be put into cold water, and boil very gradually; but if erimped or dressed in thin slices, it should be put at once into boiling water, in which, after permitting it to remain about a minute, lift up the drain, and letting the water flow off, let it thus remain for about a couple of minutes, repeating this once or twice afterwards, which will cause the eurd to set, and make the fish eat more crisply; then return it to the kettle, and let it continue to boil at a gentle rate until done.

The best sauce for salmon is lobster, shrimp, or anehovy; it may also be eaten with ketchup, or soy, Cornubian sauce, or vinegar. Sliced cucumber may also be eaten with it; as also eapers mixed up in melted butter, prepared in the same way as when eaten with boiled mutton.

Trout and Salmon Peel.

All these fishes should be boiled whole, and eaten with the same sauce as the salmon; vinegar and scraped horseradish should be put into the water with them, and, in taking them up,

allow the water to drain away from them, and take care to avoid breaking the skin.

To boil Tench.

This fish should be boiled in precisely the same way as the last, and served up garnished with sliced lemon, and chopped parsley, mixed up in melted butter. It may also be accompanied by slices of cucumber.

Basse, Mullet, and Perch.

All these should be boiled in the same manner as eodlings and whittings. The two former may be eaten with crab, lobster, shrimp sauce, or anchovy; the latter with soy, ketchup, Cornubian sauce, Chili, or common white wine vinegar, to the latter of which may be added sliced cucumber.

Gurnards.

These fishes are boiled in the same manner as the last, and may be accompanied with crab sauce, which seems peculiarly adapted to them, but there are few, if any, sauces they eat amiss with. They should boil very gently, and care should be taken to prevent as much as possible the skin from breaking; but this cannot be wholly prevented by any care or precaution, and the

fresher the fish the more it occurs. These fish may also be boiled with a pudding in their bellies, in the manner we shall direct a fresh water pike to be done.

Herrings and Pilchards.

These fish, when boiled, must be previously scaled and washed, and then rubbed over with vinegar and salt, and should be put into boiling water, and allowed to boil away at a moderate rate for about ten minutes, and should be eaten with parsley and butter, or mustard mixed up with melted butter. Pilchards may be eaten with raw onions chopped up fine.

To boil a Pike.

A pike, when boiled, should always be dressed with a forcemeat pudding in its belly, which should be prepared as follows: bread-crumbs, a small portion of sweet herbs and parsley chopped fine, a little lemon peel, a good sized piece of butter mixed up with the yolks of a couple of eggs, and seasoned with nutmeg, cayenne, common pepper and salt; a few oysters chopped up will make a valuable, but not indispensable, addition. The pudding must be served up in the belly of the fish, which should then have its tail skewered in its mouth, and be boiled and served

up in the same manner as we have previously directed for a salmon.* Garnish with sliced lemon, and serve it up with plain melted butter.

Eels and Congers.

Neither of these fishes should be boiled, unless of large size. Eels should be first skinned, but the skin must be retained upon congers; but either kind should be cut up in small portions, to disguise their snake-like form, and for the same reason most persons throw the head away. They should be served up with chopped parsley, mixed up in melted butter.

To boil a Turbot.

Great attention is required to boil a turbot properly, for being, when in prime order, a very thick and solid fish, as compared with the rest of the flounder tribe, it necessarily takes some time to boil thoroughly, and if the process be conducted carelessly the skin is very apt to break, which not only injures the appearance of the fish, but in some degree deteriorates from its goodness. To prevent this some preliminary steps are necessary, both in preparing the water, as well as the fish itself, before it is put into it.

* See page 165.

In the first place, see that your kettle is sufficiently large, and then pour into it water enough to cover the fish, and throw in a handful of salt, half a pint of vinegar, some pieces of shred horseradish, and sweet herbs; let all these ingredients boil up for some time in the water, so that it may imbibe all their strength; then lift off the kettle and allow the water to become perfectly cool. Then take the turbot, and searing it just through the skin on the dark side (which is the most effectual means of preventing it from cracking on the other), place your fish in the kettle, with the dark side downwards, and as soon as the water boils check it as before directed.*

A moderate sized turbot will take about twenty minutes, and a large one from five-and-twenty minutes to half an hour boiling. When done enough, take care to drain it well, lay it on a napkin placed upon a fish-drain, and serve it up garnished with sliced lemon, and scraped horseradish strewed over the fish. The spawn of a hen lobster spread over the white side of the fish gives it a very elegant and attractive appearance.

It should be accompanied with lobster, or shrimp, or crab sauce. Anchovy, soy, ketchup, Cornubian sauce, or vinegar, may also be eaten with it, as may also sliced cucumber.

* See page 159.

Brills, Plaice, Flounders, and small Halibut.

All these fish may be prepared and boiled in the same manner as a turbot; but it must always be kept in mind that not being so thick and solid they will not take so long a time in their cookery. They may all be eaten with the same sauces as a turbot, except that crab sauce is better adapted than any other kind whatever to a boiled plaice.

The larger halibuts are usually boiled cut up in portions, and a turbot may also be dressed in the same way.

To boil Soles.

These fish should be skinned on both sides previously to boiling, and should have a little shred horseradish, a wine glass of vinegar, and a little salt cast into the water; they should boil very gently, and care should be taken to skim off all the scum. Serve up either with shrimp, lobster, crab, or anchovy sauce. Garnish with sliced lemon, and strew a little shred horseradish over the fish.

To boil Scate.

This fish, being prepared as before directed*, should be placed in boiling water, and boil for about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. As the

* See page 147.

thinner parts do not take so long a time as the thicker in dressing, the latter should be put into the water first. Crab sauce is the best accompaniment; but if that cannot be procured, you may substitute anchovy or Cornubian sauce.

To boil Sturgeon.

The fish should be placed in sufficient cold water to cover it, into which should be cast some pieces of lemon peel or stick of horseradish, some whole pepper, and a pint of vinegar to every two quarts of water. Carry on the boiling process in the same way as in cooking a cod's head and shoulders.* Garnish with sliced lemon and scraped horseradish, and serve it up with crab or lobster sauce, plain melted butter, and anchovy sauce. Sliced cucumber may also be served up with it.

To boil Mackerel.

No fish is so easily boiled as mackerel, provided you only boil them long enough, as none requires so much boiling to make it firm; and, like an egg, the longer you boil them the harder they become; for we have known instances where they have been allowed to boil for upwards of three hours, and yet were not only firm and solid, but the flavour not in the slightest degree

* See page 161.

impaired. This is very unaccountable, as every other kind of fish we are acquainted with would have been boiled to rags, or a mere pulp, or dissolved altogether by such a mode of treatment. If any one doubts what we have stated, they have only to try the experiment to set all such doubts at rest.

Chopped fennel in melted butter is the proper sauce for boiled mackerel; some persons eat green gooseberries with them.

To boil Crabs, Lobsters, and Crayfish.

Let the water boil fiercely, then cast into it a handful or two of salt, and then plunge in the crab or lobster. About a quarter of an hour will boil a large crab or lobster, but a smaller one will do in lesser time.

A crab may be killed by cutting off a portion of one of its legs between the joints, when it will speedily bleed to death; but if the leg be divided at a joint, the contraction of the muscles will prevent the blood from flowing, and thus the desired effect will be prevented.

Prawns and Shrimps

Are often utterly spoilt in undergoing the process of boiling, though, if properly managed, it is very simple and easy. First have the

water boiling briskly, throw into it a handful or two of salt, and then east in the prawns or shrimps, which, as soon as they are done enough, will float upon the surface. They should then be emptied out into a eullender, and as soon as the water has drained off from them, they should be thrown into a dry towel, and a good quantity of salt strewed over and rubbed into them quickly, whilst they remain hot, which having done, wrap them up in the towel, and there allow them to remain until they become quite cold.

To boil Cockles and Mussels.

These only require to be placed in a stew-pan over a brisk fire. No water will be required, as the liquor which oozes from their shells will be ample for the purpose. As soon as the shells are sufficiently open to permit you to extraet the animal substance within, they are dressed.

SECTION II.

HOW TO FRY FISH.

Notwithstanding the wretched examples of fried fish we have often met with at the tables of our acquaintance, there is no branch in the art

of cookery more easy to attain, if the proper means are but duly attended to.

In the first place, the fire should be clear and free from smoke, and yet not burn too fiercely.

Secondly, the frying pan must be clean, and not overworn in the service, as in the latter case the fish will be likely to stick to it, and also to become burnt and discoloured.

Thirdly, the pan should be properly prepared by being moistened with a little butter or lard, which should be melted in it over the fire, and when completely dissolved, the pan should be wiped out with a cloth before the fat in which the fish is intended to be fried is cast into it.

Fourthly, the lard, butter, dripping, oil, or whatever material the fish is to be fried in, must not be stinted in quantity. This should also be allowed to be not only completely dissolved, but also to boil up before the fish itself is placed in the frying-pan.

Fifthly, the fish itself should be thoroughly dried and folded in a cloth, and either well dredged with flour, or completely coated with egg and bread-crumbs.

Sixthly, when once in the frying-pan, the fish must never be left for one moment unattended to, and must fry at a moderate rate, and when one side is done enough, it must be care-

fully turned over with a fish-slice on the other, until that side also is thoroughly cooked.

When done sufficiently, let all the fat drain off, which is best done by means of a hair sieve; then place the fish on a fish drain, or if intended for company, place it on a napkin.

Oil is generally considered the best material to fry fish in, but we have found hog's lard answer the purpose equally well, besides the advantage of being much cheaper. Beef and pork dripping may also be used, but the dripping of mutton does not answer so well, as it is apt to impart a muttoney flavour to the fish. Butter does not fry fish so well as dripping, and should not be used when the latter can be procured, except when the fish is to be merely partly fried as a preliminary stage to the stewing process, when good fresh butter will be the proper thing to be used.

If the above rules are carefully adhered to, there will be no difficulty whatever in attaining the desired object.

How to fry Cod.

The portion of a codfish best adapted for frying is the thin part about the tail, which should be split close to the backbone, the latter

of which may be either cut out entirely, or one side may be fried with a portion of the bone adhering to it. This portion of the cod is usually fried without being coated over with any egg and bread-crumbs; and should be served up with plain melted butter, and eaten with anchovy, Cornubian sauce, soy or ketchup.

If the thicker parts of the fish are fried, they should be cut in slices of about an inch in thickness, through the backbone; and may be done either with or without egg and bread-crumbs.

Large haddocks, ling, whiting pollack, coal-fish, and large bass, may also be prepared and served up in the same manner.

Codlings, small Haddocks, and Pollack.

Having scaled the fish, and washed it clear from all slime, open them by the back close to the backbone, and split them down to the very tail, leaving the belly-part entire; then taking out the intestines, and thoroughly cleansing the backbone, flour and dry your fish, and fry them in plenty of dripping until they become of a fine pale brown, managing them very carefully, particularly in turning them in the frying-pan, as they are very tender and apt to break in pieces if at all roughly handled. When done, drain off the fat, and serve them up garnished

with fried parsley, and accompanied with plain melted butter, mustard and vinegar, and anehovy or Cornubian sauee.

To fry Whiting.

Fix the tail of the fish in its mouth, in which position it can be secured by means of a small wooden skewer, although it frequently happens that the long, sharp teeth of the fish are alone sufficient for the purpose; then, having the fish perfectly dry, rub the body over with an egg beaten up, and then sprinkle it plentifully with bread-crums; after which place each fish so prepared upon its belly in the frying-pan, with plenty of dripping all ready, in the manner we have previously mentioned, and fry them very gently until the under-side is done, and then turn them over carefully, and let them fry at the same rate until thoroughly cooked. Be sure not to stint the dripping, for if you do, you will probably spoil your fish. When done, garnish with fried parsley, and serve them up on a napkin, accompanied with plain melted butter, mustard, vinegar, Cornubian sauee, anehovy, soy, or ketchup. If Cornubian sauee, which is particularly well adapted to whiting cooked in the above manner, is used, mixing it with mustard is by many considered an improvement. Whittings are some-

times skinned previously to being coated with egg and bread-crumbs.

In order that the fried parsley may look well, and retain its colour, after being well washed, it should be thrown into boiling dripping, but must only be permitted to stay there for a few seconds, which will crisp it sufficiently, without destroying its colour, as it would certainly do if allowed to remain much longer.

The mode of frying whiting we have just mentioned, is better adapted to small or moderate sized fish than to those of any considerable size; the latter of which when fried are either split up in the way we have directed codlings and had-docks to be done, or else, without being split, are cut up into two or three pieces, in which form they are often employed to garnish some larger kind of boiled fish. We ourselves, however, consider it a bad plan to associate boiled and fried fish together in the same dish, as the steam arising from the former must necessarily prove injurious to the latter, and which, on that account, should always be served up in a separate dish. Habit probably has reconciled us to the inconsistency of placing boiled and fried on the same dish, but in which there is no more real propriety than there would be in placing fried mutton chops or veal cutlets as a garnish for a boiled round of

beef, which, if so produced at table, would excite no small degree of amazement amongst the company.

To fry Whiting-pouts.

These fish are delicious if they can be procured perfectly fresh, and be properly fried afterwards, the latter of which is not a very easy task, even for a practised hand, as these fish are exceedingly tender, and, from being required to be dressed fresh, are apt to curl up in the frying-pan and break in frying, in spite of all the care that may be taken to prevent it. The best way, however, is, after scaling and gutting the fish, which must be by the belly, to dry them with a cloth for an hour or so before they are required for the frying-pan, and, previously to placing them there, dredge them well with flour or egg and bread-crumbs, and fry them in plenty of dripping, until they are thoroughly done and become brown and crisp; then serve them up garnished with sliced lemon, and accompanied with the same sauces as whiting. Any kind of small fish may be fried to advantage by following these rules.

To fry Hake.

This fish should always be fried in cutlets, which makes one of the best dishes of fish that can be placed on a dinner-table. They should be prepared

as follows :—Cut the cutlets lengthwise, and not across the body of the fish, of about the length and breadth, but of twice the thickness, of an ordinary veal cutlet, the fish being previously well scaled and gutted, and the backbone extracted in the manner we have already pointed out*, but the skin must be retained; then, drying the pieces well in a cloth, cover them plentifully with egg and bread-crumbs, and when dressed serve them up in a clean napkin, and garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon. Melted butter and the same sauces may be eaten with it as with whiting.

The head, backbone, the portions about the fins, and other parts not adapted for cutlets, may, however, be turned to very good account in furnishing the materials for a gravy to accompany the cutlets, the directions for making which will be duly given when we come to treat of fish-gravies, — a subject by no means to be passed over lightly, though it is a branch of the art of cookery which people in general know little about, or seldom attempt to carry into practice.

* See page 143.

To fry Eels.

Eels require to be cut up in pieces before they are fried. If large, they should be done very slowly, and in an ample supply of dripping. Egg and bread-crumbs should be sprinkled over them; to this parsley and sweet herbs, chopped up very fine, are sometimes added. Serve them up with plain melted butter, and also chopped parsley in melted butter; capers are also considered a good accompaniment, as a corrective of the fat, luscious flavour of these fishes, which is found too strong for delicate stomachs, and for the same reason we consider the Cornubian sauce particularly well suited to them; still, any of the sauces we have before mentioned may be used. The heads, from their snake-like form, should never be prepared and served up with the other parts.

To fry Congers.

The smaller kind of congers are fried cut up in the same way as eels, but are not previously deprived of their skins; the heads and the portions near the tail are, however, often rejected, the former from its snake-like look, and the latter on account of the quantity of small, wiry bones that abound in that portion of the body, and prove exceedingly troublesome; still these re-

jeeted parts serve to make a gravy for the other parts, and may also be converted into an excellent soup, as we shall duly notice hereafter.

To fry conger properly, the process must be twice gone through. First, the pieces must be put into the frying-pan with a moderate quantity of dripping, in which the fish must be first partially fried, for the purpose of extracting the watery particles from the body, which, mixing with the fat in the pan, causes a considerable frizzling, and in this the fish would never fry to a proper brown colour. Let the frying, however, go on until the frizzling begins to subside, and then take out the fish, and having poured away the contents of the pan, wiped it out, and put in plenty of fresh dripping, replace it on the fire, and when the dripping is melted and begins to boil, put in the pieces of conger again, and let them fry gently until thoroughly dressed. When done, serve it up with plain melted butter, parsley and butter, or fennel sauce; anchovy, soy, ketchup, or Cornubian sauce may also be eaten with it.

If a fish-gravy is made from the other parts, it should be served up in boats with the melted butter.

To fry Lampreys.

The sea lamprey should always be split up previously to frying, and the gristle which supplies the place of a backbone extracted. Only the parts below the holes or gill apertures are fit to be eaten; the slime should also be well scraped off, but the skin should be retained. It should be fried until it becomes a fine pale-brown, and should previously be well coated with flour, or egg and bread-crumbs.

The small river lamprey may be fried cut up in small pieces like an eel, and without being split open, the slime being first cleaned away, and the parts above the gill-holes cut off and cast away. They should be eaten with chopped parsley and butter.

To fry Perch.

Perch, previously to being fried, should be opened by the belly, and all the fins cut off close to the body; care also must be taken to scale them thoroughly, which often proves a troublesome affair, on account of the great tenacity with which the scaly coating adheres to their bodies. When cleaned and scaled, they should be well dried, and then, being coated in egg and bread-crumbs, should be fried of a light-brown. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon, and serve them up

with plain melted butter. Many of the fish-sauces we have previously mentioned may be eaten with this fish. Ruffles and weevers, and also shads, or the fry of the sea-bream may be cooked and served up in the same manner.

To fry Bass and Mullet.

Small bass and mullet, that is, fishes of either of these kinds, of less than half a pound weight, should be prepared and fried in the same manner as we have just before directed for cooking perch; when they exceed the above-mentioned size they should be split open by the back, and fried in the way we have before directed for codlings and haddock. A very large bass should, however, be cut up in steaks, in the way we have ordered a cod to be done; but a large mullet should be cut up in cutlets in the same manner as a hake. The head, bones, and other superfluous parts will serve as materials for a gravy.

Serve up with plain melted butter, and any of the fish-sauces we have before mentioned may be eaten with either of these fishes.

To fry Wrasse.

Scale them thoroughly, and cutting off all their fins close to the body, pepper and salt them well, and hang them up to dry for three or four hours

before you attempt to fry them, which must be done in plenty of dripping; and they should be fried very brown, to get rid as much as possible of the watery softness which makes all these fishes so little prized as articles of food.

To fry Gurnards.

Gurnards of every kind, when intended for the frying-pan, may be opened by the back or belly, the slime and scales having been previously seraped off, and the fins all cut away close to the body; they should be well dried and thoroughly dredged with flour, but without using any egg or bread-crumbs. They should be fried in the same manner as eodlings and haddocks; but being a more solid fish, they will take a longer time in doing. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon. Crab, lobster, shrimp, or oyster sauce makes a very agreeable accompaniment, but every kind of fish-sauce is suited to them.

To fry Carp and Tench.

Carp are not often fried, except as a preparatory step to the stewing process; but when they are to be dressed entirely by frying, they must be done in precisely the same manner as the perch. If the fish has a roe, it should be fried separately, and not in the body of the fish; and,

if large, will take a longer time to be thoroughly done than the fish itself. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon, and the roes of the fish, one lobe being placed on each side of it. The sauce should be melted butter and anchovy, with a slight squeeze of lemon in it.

Tench may be fried in the same way, but should be served up with parsley and butter, or fennel-sauce; yet any of the other sauces we have mentioned may be eaten with it.

To fry Rudds, Bream, Roach, Dace, Chub, and Barbel.

All these fish should be prepared in the same manner as the perch, but should be fried very thoroughly, so as to extract the water, and give them something of a firmness, which frying, better than any other process, is calculated to produce on soft, watery, and insipid fishes, as all these most undoubtedly are. They should, therefore, be fried until they become perfectly brown and crisp, and then, if eaten with anchovy or Cornubian sauce, mixed up in melted butter, they will serve as a passable dish of fish when no better kinds can be procured.

To fry Mackerel and Garfish.

These fish, when intended to be fried, should be opened by the back, and being thoroughly dried, may be fried, either dredged over with flour or egg and bread-crums. They must be fried in plenty of dripping, and of a deep-brown colour. They may be served up either with parsley and butter, or fennel. Cornubian sauce, mustard and vinegar, mixed up in melted butter, is the best sauce, as it conceals the excessive richness which so often causes these fish, if eaten in quantity, to disagree with many constitutions; but they will eat very agreeably with anchovy, soy, or ketchup.

Garfish, after being well sealed and the fins cut off, should be opened by the back, and the backbone taken out; then, being cut in pieces, should be fried in the same manner until done thoroughly brown. They may be served up in the same way, and eaten with the same sauces, as mackerel; the latter of which they very much resemble in flavour, but are rather dryer.

To fry Sand Lance, Sprats and Minnows.

All these little fishes are cleaned by nipping off their heads just below the gill-covers, and drawing out the intestines, the scales and slime being rubbed off with a rough towel, and being dried

in a cloth and well dredged with flour, should be fried thoroughly brown and crisp, so that the smaller fish may be eaten bones and all, without danger or inconvenience. Garnish with sliced lemon, and serve them up with plain melted butter.

To fry Whitebait.

Dry them thoroughly, then, dipping them in egg, throw them in some flour, giving them a shake, so that plenty of flour may adhere to their bodies, and then, placing them in a frying-pan, with plenty of dripping, continue to dredge them with flour all the time they are frying, until it forms a complete coating over them. Take care to keep them all in motion, so that they may not adhere to each other, or stiek to the frying-pan. Serve them up with a lemon cut in halves, and eat them with brown bread and butter. Very small sprats or minnows may be cooked to advantage in the same way.

To fry Herrings and Shads.

Herrings, after being deprived of their scales, must be opened by the belly; then take out the inside and preserve the roe, which must be fried separately. Then, having thoroughly cleansed the

fish, score it in three or four places across the body on both sides into the very backbone, by which means the watery particles, which are so objectionable in these fish, will escape, and the flesh will become crisp and firm. Dry and flour them well, and fry them till they are done perfectly brown, and garnish with the roes. Fried onions are also an excellent accompaniment with these fish, and should be served up with the roes in the same dish with the fish.

Mustard and vinegar mixed up in melted butter is the best sauce.

Shads of both kinds may be fried and served up in precisely the same manner as herrings.

To fry Pilchards.

Pilchards should be thrown into the frying-pan just as they come out of the nets, and, if possible, care should be taken to select such only whose scales are perfect and entire. Very little dripping will suffice to fry them, as they are so fat and rich as to supply their own dripping. When done, serve them up in their scales, which may be easily removed when they are to be eaten by inserting a knife under, when the whole covering will come off entire. When a pilchard can be procured fresh and living from the sea, and cooked as soon after it expires as possible, it

is extremely rich and delicious; but, from its fat and oily nature, they soon become fat and rancid, so that, except at the spot where they are taken, they cannot be partaken of in their highest state of perfection. These fish are usually eaten by the Cornish people with salt and water, with raw onion chopped up fine. We, however, consider plain melted butter, mixed up with mustard and vinegar, and fried chopped onions, to be a great improvement on the salt and water and raw onion.

To fry Salmon.

Cut your fish in slices of about a hand's thickness, fry them slowly of a pale-brown, and take care that they are done enough, and serve them up with plain melted butter and anchovy sauce. Sliced cucumber is also a pleasing accompaniment.

Another Way.

Take your slices of fish in the proportions above mentioned, and after seasoning them with cayenne and pepper and salt, envelope them in white paper, and fry them until they are sufficiently done; then serve them up in the paper with plain melted butter and anchovy sauce; some consider caper sauce as an agreeable accompaniment.

To fry Surmullet.

Prepare your surmullet according to the directions we have previously laid down *, and, folding them up in white paper, fry them until thoroughly done, and then serve them up in the paper, accompanied with plain melted butter, which, with their livers managed according to the instructions we have already given, is the only sauce that should be eaten with them.

To fry Salmon, Peal, Trout, Grayling, and Charr.

Any of these fish, if large, should, previously to being fried, be opened by the back, and cooked in every respect as mackerel have been directed to be done, and may be served up with the same sauces, as also with the addition of shrimp or lobster sauce.

Small fish should be opened by the belly, and, being well coated with egg and bread-crumbs, should be fried brown and crisp. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon, and serve them up with plain melted butter and anchovy sauce.

Smelts, Gudgeons, and Atherines

May be prepared and cooked in the same manner as in the last receipt. All these fish should be

* See pages 146, 147.

carefully sealed—an operation we have often seen very carelessly done, particularly with smelts and atherines. These fishes ought also be gutted, which is frequently omitted in the atherine, but in which it is more necessary than with any other kind of fish we know; for, although delicate in flavour, these fish are as filthy feeders as ducks, or even the very swine.

To fry Dories.

A small dory, when properly fried, is a most delicious fish, and this is the mode in which the smaller kind of this fish can be turned to best advantage. Being a firm, flat-sided fish, it seems fitted by nature for a frying-pan, and it may be done either with or without egg and bread-crums. Do not stint the dripping, and take care that the fish does not stick to the pan. When done, garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon, and serve up with plain melted butter and anchovy sauce.

To fry Soles, small Turbots, and Brills.

All these fish, if of small size, should be fried whole, the skin on the dark side being skinned off, and the pale side well scraped and cleansed from scales and slime. The fins must be cut close to the sides of the fish, which must then be well dried either in a dry cloth, or by exposure to the

air, and then, being well sprinkled with egg and bread-crumbs, must be fried of a fine pale brown, using plenty of dripping for the purpose, and taking especial care that the fish do not burn or stiek to the frying-pan. Garnish with fried parsley, and serve up with melted butter, anchovy, or Cornubian sauce: crab, lobster, and shrimp sauce will also be suited to either of these fish.

If they are of large size, they should be divided into two or three pieces. This will enable you to ascertain whether your fish is thoroughly cooked or not, which you may do by inserting a fish-slice near the backbone, in raising up the flesh in the manner we have previously pointed out.*

Another way of frying Soles, &c.

A delicious dish of fried fish may be made of either of the last mentioned fish, as also of plaice, dabs, flounders, or any other kind of flat fish, by pursuing the following instructions. Seale the fish carefully, and then cutting the flesh as closely and smoothly as possible from the bone, roll several of the pieces together with the skin outwards, so as to form a kind of fillet, between the layers of which you must place a forcemeat, con-

* See page 161.

sisting of bread-crumbs, a small portion of parsley, and a little egg to bind the whole together; and if you wish to make it still more savoury, you may add a few pickled or fresh oysters or shrimps, chopped up and mixed in the forcemeat. The outer parts should be coated with egg and bread-crumbs, and the whole should be fried thoroughly in an ample supply of dripping, and, when done, should be served up with a sauce prepared out of the heads, bones, and other superfluous parts, in the manner we shall hereafter point out.*

Dabs, Plaice, Flounders, &c.

These fish should be scaled and carefully cleaned, but, with the exception of flounders, no part of the skin should be removed; the latter may, however, be prepared either with the skin on, or skinned on the dark side, or on both sides, in the way we have previously pointed out†, and in the latter case should be covered with egg and bread-crumbs. The others may be done either with or without the latter coating, but they must otherwise be well dried and plentifully dredged over with flour. If the fish are large they should be cut up in pieces, but if small they should be dressed whole. Garnish with fried parsley, and

* See pp. 197—200.

† See page 170.

serve up with plain melted butter and anchovy or Cornubian sauce.

To fry Turbot Cutlets.

Cut off the fish from the bones in cutlets of about a hand's breadth; take off any skin that may adhere to the dark side, but allow that on the pale side to remain. Sprinkle the pieces well with egg and bread-crumb, and fry them in a plentiful supply of dripping. Brills, large plaice, flounders, and dories, may be prepared in the same way. The heads and bones will make a gravy for the fish.

Another mode.

Instead of egg and bread-crums, substitute batter, and in the latter case take care to have a plentiful supply of dripping in the pan, otherwise the cutlets will be likely to burn and the batter to get tough.

How to prepare Batter to fry Fish.

Break a couple of eggs in half a pint of milk; add to this six table-spoonsful of flour, and gradually mix the whole together. This ought to be done an hour or two before the batter is required for use, which must be beaten up again just before the cutlets are steeped in it, by which means

it will become more light than when beaten up and used immediately.

To fry Skate or Thornback.

The fish being cut up in strips, as before directed, should be well sprinkled with egg and bread-crumb, or coated in batter, and when fried of a nice brown should be served up garnished in the same manner, and eaten with the same sauces, as fried turbot cutlets. To this you may add crab sauce, which is particularly well suited to this fish.

To fry Salt Fish.

Small split codfish, and other salt fish of small size, after being watered to extract the salt, pursuant to the instructions we have before laid down*, should be fried entire, and served up with plain melted butter. Cornubian sauce, mixed up with mustard and vinegar, is the best sauce to be eaten with it.

To fry Salt-fish Cutlets.

Having well watered the fish, cut out the cutlets of about half a hand's breadth, and, dipping in batter, fry them of a pale brown. Garnish

* See page 149.

with fried parsley, and serve them up with plain melted butter.

To fry Cod's Sounds and Tongues, Mussels, and Oysters.

Having cleaned and prepared your sounds and tongues, as before directed*, dip them in batter and fry them of a pale brown. Oysters and mussels may be done in the same way. It is indeed a good plan to dress and serve up the sounds, tongues, and oysters with the salt-fish cutlets, as the whole eat more agreeably when associated together than either will do when served up separately. Some of the liquor of the oysters, mussels, or cockles, should be mixed up with the batter.

SECTION III.

GRAVIES FOR FRIED FISH.

Gravies for fried fish are seldom thought of; and yet in many instances they are a great improvement, and really a valuable acquisition, particularly to those who have a dislike to melted butter. The heads, bones, and other parts of the

* See page 163.

fish, which would otherwise be thrown away, or a very common and cheap kind of fish, with only the aid of a little butter or dripping, an onion or two, and a small portion of sweet herbs, will form the foundation, to which only a glass or two of wine need be added to make it as perfect as the most lavish expenditure could effect.

When large fish are fried either in steaks or cutlets, then, as we have previously observed*, the heads and bones may be used for the purpose; but when the fry consists of only small fish which are cooked whole, then either some of the same kind, or some other kind of fish, as small eels, congers, gurnards, flounders, or the heads and bones of a hake, which are thrown away by scores in the fish-markets in the west of England, and which any one would be thanked for carrying away, may be called into service, as may also the head and the tail extremity of a good-sized conger, the latter of which, from being so interspersed with thin wiry bones, which, though no detriment to it for making gravy, renders it exceedingly unpleasant to eat in most other ways.

The head, bones, and whatever other pieces you use, must be thoroughly cleansed, and should then be either fried or baked in butter until they

* See page 180.

become brown; the pieces must then be taken out and placed in a stewpan, with a small quantity of water or broth. A large-sized onion, or two or three small ones, well coated with flour, must then be fried brown in the butter in which the pieces of fish were done, and then, with the butter, must be cast into the stewpan, with some sweet herbs and a small piece of butter of about the size of a walnut, or, what is still better, a proportionate quantity of cream in lieu of the butter. Season with cayenne, common pepper, salt, nutmeg, a squeeze of lemon, a teaspoonful of Cornubian sauce, or twice that portion of lemon pickle or ketchup. Let the whole stew together until it becomes of the consistency of raw cream, or rather until the liquid has decreased about one-third of its original quantity.

You may add to the above some pickled onions and mushrooms, as also a few oysters, either fresh or pickled; if fresh, add to the gravy in the stewpan the liquor of the oysters also. A glass or two of wine, either red or white, will also be found an improvement.

If your stock of head and bones is not sufficient, then throw in a spare cutlet or two of the fish, or a small eel, conger, gurnard, or flounder cut up in pieces, and without any consideration about their being all of the same kind of fish.

When done, throw out the contents of the stewpan into a cullender or hair sieve, and let the liquid strain through it. If it proves too thin, add to it a little melted butter, coated in flour, and when prepared serve it up in boats with the fish.

SECTION IV.

HOW TO BROIL FISH.

In broiling fish, the points to be chiefly attended to are —

First, to have a clear fire, not too fierce, and yet sufficiently strong not to exhaust its force before the cookery is complete.

Secondly, to have the gridiron quite clean.

Thirdly, the fish must be well cleansed and dried.

And fourthly, all the time the broiling is going on, take care to keep the fish from sticking to the bars of the gridiron, which injures both the appearance and flavour of the fish. To prevent this, the fish should be well dusted with flour, the bars of the gridiron having previously been rubbed either with butter, lard, or suet; and the fish should not be laid on until the bars are thoroughly heated.

A little salt cast upon a strong coal fire is a

very good way to cheek the smoke and allay the strength of the fire, which at the same time makes it burn bright and clear; but ehareoal, eoke, or einders afford the best embers for broiling purposes.

How to broil large Codfish, Ling, Hake, Haddock, Pollack, or Basse.

All the above-mentioned fishes, when broiled, should be cut up in portions in the same way as for frying, and be prepared in the same way, execept that coating with egg and bread-crums must always be omitted; but its place must be supplied with a plentiful covering of flour. The pieces must be well seasoned with pepper and salt, which should be cast over them whilst dressing. When done, rub in a good supply of butter before the fire: mustard, vinegar, and Cornubian sauce will be a proper accompaniment. You may also serve up some plain melted butter; although, if a sufficient quantity of butter be rubbed into the fish, the melted butter may generally be dispensed with.

To broil Salmon Peel, Trout, Mackerel, Codlings, Whitings, Haddocks, Whiting Pollack, and Gurnards.

All these fishes should be dressed entire, being split by the back and spread open, and being well peppered and salted inside; after which they must be well dredged with flour on both sides, to prevent them from stieking to the gridiron; and when done, lay them flat and spread open, with the inside uppermost, into which plenty of butter must be rubbed before the fire.

To broil Herrings.

These fishes should be prepared in the same manner as for frying*, and should be thoroughly dried and well dredged with flour. The roes should not be dressed in the fish, but dressed separately; but as the latter are apt to slip off, between the bars, into the fire, the best way of dressing them is by frying; and as fried onions are an exeellent aecompaniment to broiled herrings, the roes and onions may share the frying-pan together. The herrings should be broiled until they are thoroughly brown, and, plenty of butter being rubbed into them, they should be served up with mustard and plain melted butter.

* See page 188.

To broil Pilchards.

Pilchards should be placed without any previous preparation on the gridiron, and, when done, should be served up in their scales, without rubbing in any butter over the fish, the rich moisture retained within by the scales rendering butter quite superfluous. The scaly covering will come off entire by placing a knife under it. Vinegar is the best sauce, for the fish itself is quite rich enough without the aid of melted butter. The Cornish people use salt and water, with onions, chopped up fine, as an accompaniment.

To broil Sprats.

Wipe off the scales with a rough towel, then, drawing out the intestines by the gills as before directed*, run a small wooden skewer through the eyes of half a dozen or more, and so broil them, sending them up on their backs, which will cause them to eat more crisply than any other means that has been yet discovered; and when so prepared, they form a very cheap and really excellent dish of fish.

To broil Eels.

Prepare the eels in the same manner as for frying†, broil them over a slow fire, and, if they

* See page 144.

† See page 181.

are large, bestow plenty of time, and see that they are thoroughly done throughout. Serve them up with plain melted butter, or with parsley and butter.

To broil Salmon.

Cut the fish in slices, as for frying*, season them well with cayenne and common pepper, a little nutmeg and some salt, then wrap the slices up in white paper, well buttered, and broil them over a slow fire. Serve them up in the paper, accompanied with the same sauces as with fried salmon. †

To broil Surmullet.

The fish being prepared in the same manner as before directed‡, and the slime wiped off with a cloth, but in so careful a manner as not to displace a scale, the fish must be folded up in white paper, which, being rubbed over with butter, must be broiled over a slow fire. The fish must be sent up to table in the paper, accompanied with plain melted butter. The way of treating the livers we have already mentioned§, and it will, therefore, be unnecessary to repeat the same instructions again in this place.

* See page 191.

† Ibid.

‡ See page 191.

§ See page 147.

*To broil Bream and Shads so as to resemble
Surmullet.*

Wipe the fish down the body with a cloth, so as to cleanse it from the slime, but not so as to displace any of the scales ; then, opening the fish, take out the inside and wipe out the body with a cloth ; and then, separating the liver from the intestines, introduce it again into the fish's belly, wrap the fish in white paper, and broil it in the same manner as a surmullet, and serve it up the same way. A fish under a pound weight is best adapted for this purpose ; and, as fish of this kind are remarkably cheap and plentiful, the livers of two or three fishes may be taken to fill the body of one fish, and the other fish applied to some other purpose ; and when prepared in this manner there are very few persons upon whom these fish might not be passed for genuine surmullet.

To broil Cod's Sounds and Tongues.

Prepare these as for boiling*, and after seasoning them with cayenne, and common pepper and a little salt, flour them well and broil them whole. Serve them up with melted butter.

* As to which, see page 163.

To broil Redherrings and Salt Pilchards.

Having steeped the herrings either in boiling water or beer, pursuant to the directions before laid down*, broil them before a brisk fire, upon a toasting-fork, until they are sufficiently done, and be sure that the roe is thoroughly dressed through; then rub in as much butter into it as will absorb before the fire. If any of them contain hard roes, open the belly, and insert some butter between the lobes of the roe, closing it up again so that the heat may the more readily melt the butter.

Mustard is the proper accompaniment for redherrings, although but few persons seem aware of it.

Salt pilchards may be broiled in the same way as redherrings.

To broil Salt Fish.

Salt fish, after being well watered, pursuant to our previous directions†, may be broiled on a gridiron, over a slow fire, and, when done, as much butter should be rubbed into it as it will absorb. It may be served up with egg sauce and parsnips. Mustard also may be eaten with it.

* See page 151.

† See page 151.

SECTION V.

HOW TO STEW FISH.

Stewing, although one of the most useful as well as economical ways to which fish may be turned to account, is one that is far less frequently practised than either of the modes we have already treated upon, arising probably from the erroneous notion which exists amongst those who know nothing at all about the matter, that it is a difficult, tedious, and expensive process, and at all times most uncertain in its results. Now this is altogether wrong; the process is neither difficult nor tedious, and though it necessarily occupies some portion of time, yet it is not necessary that so much of the cook's attention is to be taken up with it during the interval as to prevent him, or her, as the case may be, from attending to many other matters; and so far from being expensive, it is in reality a very cheap mode of cookery, as the fish itself, with the aid of a few fried onions and a small quantity of butter, will supply a sufficient gravy. And thus a very savoury dish of fish may be made out of some very cheap and common fish, that will quite equal what can be so prepared from the most scarce

and expensive kinds; and as to uncertainty of the result, that we will venture to say will never occur to those that will take the trouble to adhere to the few very simple rules we shall lay down.

The great error in stewing fish is, that the fish only undergoes one of the necessary processes, being placed raw in a quantity of water, accompanied with a few vegetables and, perhaps, a few glasses of wine, all here thrown away, and there allowed to boil away to rags in a stewpan, and then served up, broth and all together, the previous process of frying and preparing the gravy having been altogether omitted, and thus presenting such a sad sloppy, uninviting mess, that a person must be either very hungry or polite who would venture to partake of it, and still more so if he could be induced to do so a second time; and yet the same materials, properly managed, and even without the aid of the wine so wasted and thrown away, might have made a delicious dish, which every one would have partaken of with satisfaction and have gladly eaten of again.

How to stew Basse, Sea Bream, and Gurnards.

Both the basse and the bream require great attention in removing the scales, which adhere very closely to the skin: the fish also must be

carefully cleansed, and the fins cut off to the body. It must then be fried over a tolerably brisk fire, in a good quantity of butter, lard, or dripping, until it is about three parts done. Then take it up, and place it in a stewpan, and add to it a good meat gravy, or a fish gravy prepared in the manner we are about to point out, and about an equal proportion of water or broth, a table spoonful of soy or ketchup, or half that quantity of Cornubian sauce or lemon pickle, a slice or two of lemon, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season with cayenne, common pepper, a little nutmeg, and a blade or two of mace. Then flour one or two onions, and fry them brown in the same butter in which the fish was fried, turning them quickly to prevent their sticking to the pan, and when well browned, throw them, dripping and all, into the stewpan.

The above are the essential ingredients; but if you wish to make your gravy superlatively rich and good, add to it a wine-glass or two of wine, a few pickled mushrooms, and a few oysters, either fresh or pickled.

Let the whole stew gently for about an hour, then take up the fish and pour the gravy over it, and garnish with slices of lemon and fried bread cut three cornerwise.

A forcemeat pudding, prepared according to

the instructions we have previously given in our directions for boiling a pike*, sewn up in the bodies of any of these fishes, will be found an agreeable addition.

If you desire to have a fish gravy, it may be prepared out of the same materials and in the same manner as we have before directed for frying, and should stew quite as long, so as to extract the whole of the nutriment from the materials, but should contain rather more liquid in proportion, so as to allow for the shrinkage and thickening of the gravy during the stewing process after it is added to the fish. It is a good plan to prepare the gravy the day before it is wanted, and allowing it to become cold, to skim off all the fat that may have accumulated on the surface, so as to have the gravy as free from fat as possible.

To stew Carp and Tench.

Having sealed and prepared your fish as above directed*, sew up a piece of bread into the fish's belly, sufficiently large to fill up the whole cavity†, and fry it in the same manner as the last; then

* See page 167.

† The bread is inserted for the purpose of removing any muddy or disagreeable taint the fish may have acquired from the nature of the bottom, or some kind of weeds peculiar to the waters they may come from, as noticed in page 75.

take up the fish, cut through the stitches carefully, and, opening the belly, take out the bread, and place the fish in a stewpan. Having next fried up the onions and prepared your gravy, pour the whole over the fish, and let it stew in the same manner as the last.

You may add half a pint of wine to the gravy, as also a few pickled mushrooms and oysters, which will make the gravy exceedingly rich and delicious. Many persons kill their carps by cutting their throats, and, saving all the blood, throw it in for the purpose of enriching the gravy. Garnish and serve up in the same way as directed in the preceding receipt.

To stew Pike and Hake.

These fish should always be stewed with a forcemeat pudding in their bellies, prepared according to our previous directions*; and, fixing the tail in the mouth with a skewer, fry and stew them in the same manner as carp or tench. Garnish with sliced lemon, and serve up the fish resting upon its belly.

This is an excellent way of turning a large hake to most profitable account, as by this means, for a shilling, a delicious dish may be obtained, suffi-

* See page 167.

cient to satisfy eight or ten, or even a dozen people.

To stew Carp, or any other of the previously mentioned Fish, white.

When the fish is to be stewed white, it should only undergo one-third of the frying process it undergoes when intended to be done brown, and the frying process is, in fact, often dispensed with altogether. The fish must be placed in a stewpan, with about a couple of quarts of meat broth or thin fish gravy, the materials of which must be simply boiled or stewed, without being previously browned, yet so long as thoroughly to extract all the goodness from the materials, but in a larger quantity of water, to prevent the liquid from becoming too thick. Add to the broth or gravy half a pint of wine, a couple of onions, a stick of horseradish, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season with cayenne, common pepper and salt, and let the whole stew away for about an hour and a half. Whilst this is going on, pour out a couple of glasses of white wine in a small saucepan, with two anchovies, an onion, a little lemon-peel, a quarter of a pound of thick cream, and a large portion of the liquor in which the fish is stewing; add to this the yolks of two eggs well beaten up, and let the whole boil gently together for a few minutes; and just

before you take it up, squeeze a little lemon into it. Then dish up the fish, and pour the sauce over it. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Conger or Ling brown.

Conger and ling, from their elongated form, are not adapted for dressing whole in any shape or way, and if prepared in the manner we have directed for a hake, would afford a complete model of the serpentine emblem of eternity cooked up in the shape of a stew, producing altogether an effect far more singular than tempting. These fish, therefore, are stewed in portions; and for this purpose the middle parts are best adapted, the head and tails contributing to furnish the gravies. There are two ways of arranging the portions; that is to say, either in one entire piece, or in steaks. If the former plan is adopted, then a forcemeat pudding, prepared as before directed*, should be placed in the belly. The fish must then be partly fried and stewed, in the manner we have previously directed for a bass.† This is also an excellent way to dress a portion of a hake, cutting off the tail just below the vent, and the head at the shoulders; and having extracted the backbone in the way we have before directed‡,

* See page 167. † See page 208. ‡ See page 143.

make all these into gravy, and fill up the body with a forcemeat pudding. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Conger, fresh-water Eels, Ling, Hake, Cod, &c., in steaks, brown.

Cut your steaks in the same way as before directed for frying*, and fry and prepare them in precisely the same manner as for stewing bass, &c.†, the head, bones, and other superfluous parts of the fish forming the gravy. Take care, if possible, not to break the pieces in taking them up. Garnish with fried bread, cut three corner-wise, and sliced lemon. To this you may add forcemeat and egg-balls, which are certainly a vast improvement.

This is an admirable mode of dressing a moderate-sized conger; but only the middle portions should be used in the stew, the other parts should be used to supply the gravy.

Fresh-water eels may be stewed in precisely the same way, only that every portion of them except the heads may be devoted to the stewpan. An additional squeeze or two of lemon, and a rather larger quantity of soy, Cornubian sauce, or ketchup, will be an advantage to the latter kind

* See page 167.

† See page 108.

of fish; and a glass or two of wine in the gravy, will always be an improvement: if you consider the wine too expensive, substitute the same quantity of cider, which will answer the purpose nearly as well; so well, indeed, that few persons would detect the difference. The forcemeat and egg-balls must, however, be omitted, which, though so well adapted to stewed conger, are not suited to fresh-water eels when cooked in that way.

To stew Lampreys.

Split open the lampreys and extract the gristle that supplies the place of a backbone; cut them up in pieces and stew them brown, precisely as we have directed for eels, in the preceding receipt. They may also be dressed by rolling up the pieces in a fillet, which can be kept together by running a skewer through it.

The small river lampreys, after being prepared in the same manner as for frying, may be stewed cut up in small pieces.

Another way of stewing Lampreys.

Having prepared your lampreys, rolled up into fillets as in the preceding receipt, place them in the stewpan, together with a few slices of butter, in half a pint of gravy, and half that quantity of

white wine or cider, and the same quantity of claret or port wine, an onion cut up in slices, a little lemon-peel cut up fine, and a bundle of sweet herbs; season well with pepper, salt, cloves, nutmeg, a blade or two of mace, and a little cayenne; stew over a slow fire. When done, pour off all the liquor into a saucepan, and boil it up with a couple of anchovies, a tea-spoonful of mustard, and a squeeze of lemon; thicken the gravy by shaking in a little flour, and after the whole has boiled up for a few minutes, take up the fillets from the stewpan, and, placing them in a dish, pour the gravy over them. Garnish with fried bread and slices of lemon.

When the lampreys can be procured alive, it is a frequent practice to bleed them and preserve their blood to mix with and enrich the gravy.

To stew Congers, Eels, &c., white.

Congers, when stewed white, are cut up in wider portions than when stewed brown, and are indeed sometimes done in one entire piece. It should only undergo the first preliminary frying process in the manner we have before pointed out, in order to extract all the rank and watery particles*, after which the fish should be transmitted

* See page 182.

to the stewpan. Then boil one or two onions in the water or broth in which the fish is intended to be stewed, until they become soft and tender. Then pour the liquid over the fish, and add to the same a quantity of new milk, and let it stew gently until it is thoroughly done; then throw in a sufficient quantity of cream to make a rich gravy. Season with cayenne and salt, keeping the whole in motion, so as to prevent it from eurdling, for two or three minutes; and just before taking it up, add to it a squeeze of a lemon.

To stew Mackerel.

Open the fish by the back, and take out the bones; and with the latter, the heads, and any other materials you have at hand, make about half a pint of fish gravy; to this add about the same quantity of meat gravy or strong meat broth, a piece of butter coated in flour, an anchovy or half a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce, the same quantity of Cornubian sauce or about twice as much soy or ketchup, a squeeze of lemon, a little chopped fennel and parsley, and a pickled onion or two. Season with cayenne pepper, and salt. Having all these ingredients prepared in your stewpan, cut up your fish, if large into quarters, if small split them into

halves; then roll the pieces round a wooden skewer, and, placing them in a saucepan, add a glass of port wine to the gravy; let it boil for a minute or two; then take up the fish, and, after straining the gravy through a hair sieve or cullender, pour it over the fish. Garnish with fried bread, cut three cornerwise, and sliced lemon.

To stew Soles and all kinds of moderate-sized Flat-fish.

Having skinned and prepared your soles as before directed, fry them until they are half-done, and then stew them in the same way we have directed for bass*, with the simple addition of a couple of anchovies, or a table-spoonful of anchovy sauce, thrown into the gravy.

Flounders, plaice, and dabs may be done in the same way, but should be dressed with their skins on, but which, of course, should be well cleansed from scales and slime, and the fins all trimmed off close to the body. It is also better to divide them into two or three pieces. Small turbot and brills may also be prepared in the same manner, but the former should have the skin stripped from off the dark side, for the purpose of getting rid of the hard tubercles

* See page 208.

interspersed over that part of the fish, which are exceedingly troublesome if the skin to which they are attached is permitted to remain.

Serve them up with the gravy poured over the fish, and garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew large Soles, Turbot, &c.

Very large soles are best prepared for stewing by cutting the flesh as clean as possible from the bones, which is either rolled round in fillets or cut up into outlets, the bones and heads being applied to make the gravy; in other respects, it should be stewed and served up in the same way as if the fish was cooked entire.*

Large turbot, brills, plaice, and halibut, may be either stewed entire or cut up into outlets; but the latter is the preferable mode.

To stew Ray or Skate.

Ray and skate of every kind and description are excellent stewed; the finny portions should be skinned and crimped in the same form as for frying, some of the other portions of the fish, or some of the crimped parts themselves, being called into service for the gravy. It should then be stewed in precisely the same manner as conger steaks are directed to be

* See page 218.

done*, and served up with foremeat and egg-balls, being garnished with fried bread, cut three cornerwise, and sliced lemon.

To stew Sturgeon.

Sturgeon should be cut up in slices of about an inch, or a little more, in thickness, which, being half-fried, should be placed in a stewpan with some good veal broth, an onion, and a bundle of sweet herbs, and be allowed to stew until it becomes perfectly tender. Having then fried an onion or two in the butter in which the fish was previously fried, pour this, and also the gravy in which the fish was stewed, into a saucepan, adding to it a glass or two of wine, some butter rolled in flour, or about the same proportion of cream, and a spoonful of ketchup, or half that quantity of Cornubian sauce. As soon as the whole has boiled up well together, strain it through a sieve or cullender, and pour it over the fish. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew salt Ling.

This is a very nice way of cooking a salt ling, and an exceedingly useful one, as you may at all times have a stock of the necessary commodity in hand to supply an emergency whenever it may

* See page 214.

be required, and at a time and season when no other kind of fish can possibly be procured. And now for the receipt.

Having thoroughly steeped your fish in water, and allowed it to drain, so as to extract the superabundant saline particles*, take a piece of the proportionate quantity you require, and boil it gently, until sufficiently done to enable you to pull it in pieces with a fork, which you must do by that means, at the same time taking care to detach all the bones from it.

The supply of sauce will, of course, depend upon the quantity of fish it is intended to accompany. For a moderate-sized piece, four onions, four eggs, and a pint of new milk, and half that quantity of cream, will be sufficient. The onions must be boiled before the sauce is made, and the eggs boiled hard and cut up into slices. Then take some butter rolled in flour, and some mustard, and mix it with the onions and eggs, and let the whole of these boil up gently with the fish for about half an hour. Then take up the whole and throw it in a dish, placing sliced hard-boiled egg over it, and garnish with sliced lemon.

* See page 150.

To stew Cod's Sounds and Tongues.

Having the sounds and tongues prepared as before directed*, boil them in milk and water until they are about half-done. Then, having ready some veal broth, put into it two boiled onions, a small piece of butter rolled in flour and enough cream to thicken the gravy, and a piece of lemon-peel; then put in the sounds and tongues, and let the whole stew away gently for about twenty minutes. Season with a little nutmeg, cayenne, common pepper and salt. Garnish with sliced lemon.

To stew Pilchards with Potatoes.

This is a truly Cornish dish, and will, we fear, suit few but Cornish palates. Wash some salt pilehards, and place them with some peeled potatoes in a saucepan, with a sufficient quantity of water to prevent the stew from burning; let the whole boil until the potatoes are done, and then serve up the fish and potatoes in the same dish.

To stew Lobsters.

Take a large lobster, or two small ones, and extracting all the meat from the head, body, tail, and claws, and carefully extracting the black gut, break it all up into small portions; put the whole into about half a pint of strong fish or meat gravy,

* See page 163.

in which the shells should be previously broken small, and boiled up ; add to this a piece of butter rolled in flour or a proportionate quantity of cream, half a glass of white wine or a table-spoonful of vinegar, an anchovy, or a tea-spoonful of anchovy sauce, the same quantity of Cornubian sauce, soy, or ketchup ; add a slight squeeze of lemon. Season with cayenne, common pepper, salt, nutmeg, and some pounded mace ; let the whole warm gently over a slow fire until it begins to simmer ; then serve it up garnished with sliced lemon and bread sippets.

Another way.

The lobster, being minced up fine, should be stewed in a pint of strong beef soup in which the broken shells should be first boiled up, to which must be added butter coated in flour, a glass of wine, a tea-spoonful of anchovy, and another of soy or ketchup, and a squeeze of lemon. Season with cayenne pepper, salt, and a little bruised mace ; let the whole stew very slowly, and simmer for two or three minutes. Serve it up in the same manner as in the last receipt.

To stew Lobsters in the Irish way.

Cut and break a boiled lobster, but not into small pieces ; then having ready-prepared a mixture of mustard and vinegar, seasoned with cayenne,

put this, with the lobster and a good-sized piece of butter, into a stewpan; keep the cover close for about five minutes; then throw in a glass of sherry or madeira, and let it boil up for about five minutes more; then serve it up garnished with sliced lemon.

In Ireland this savoury mess is often prepared in the same apartment in which it is eaten, being cooked in a machine called a *dispatcher*, which has a spirit-lamp under it, and is dressed in the presence of the company, whose appetites are greatly excited by the agreeable odour it emits whilst the cooking process is progressing.

Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, in his *Irish Sketch Book*, speaks in the highest terms of this dish; he also informs us that porter is drank with it, and whisky punch afterwards.

To stew Prawns and Crayfish.

These must be boiled according to the directions we have previously laid down*, and when cold the shells and heads, which should be slightly bruised, must be boiled up in a small quantity of water or meat broth, with a blade or two of mace, and a few whole peppercorns, until the strength is thoroughly extracted from the whole of the ingredients. Then strain off the liquor and throw

* See page 172.

it into a stewpan with a glass of white wine, or rather less than the same quantity of vinegar; a good-sized piece of butter rolled in flour, or a trifle more than the weight of the butter in cream; season with cayenne, common pepper, salt, a little grated nutmeg, and some pounded mace; then put in the prawns' tails, and let the whole simmer gently together for a minute or two, but be careful it does not boil up too strongly; then pour the whole into a dish, and serve them up hot.

A portion of lobster, cray fish, or crab, may be mixed up with the prawns, if required.

To stew Oysters.

Mix the liquor of the oysters with an equal quantity of water or meat broth, a little white wine or vinegar, a little whole pepper, or a blade or two of mace; let the whole boil up together, and then put in the oysters and let them just boil up; thicken the gravy with a piece of butter rolled in flour, or, what is still better, a proportionate quantity of cream. Serve them up with the gravy; garnish with sliced lemon and bread sippets.

To stew Mussels and Cockles.

Having placed your mussels or cockles in a

stewpan over the fire, until the shells become open, throw them into a cullender over a deep dish, so that you may be able to preserve a sufficient quantity of the liquor that comes from them ; then take out the contents from the shells and throw as much of the liquor as you require into a small stewpan ; add to it a good-sized piece of butter, and a proportionate quantity of vinegar to give it an agreeable flavour ; season with cayenne, plenty of common pepper, and warm it gently over a slow fire, keeping it stirring all the time, and when it simmers, throw in the mussels or cockles, and there let them remain for about a couple of minutes ; then throw them into a deep dish and serve them up hot.

In preparing mussels, be careful to extract their fibrous beards, which, if eaten, will be attended with very unpleasant, if not serious, consequences. Still, these beards, from their wiry texture grating against the teeth, cause their presence to be generally detected. It is from inadvertently swallowing these beards that mussels have acquired the ill and undeserved character of being of a poisonous nature, and which has been erroneously supposed to proceed from a small kind of crab sometimes found in the shell ; but this little creature is quite innocuous, and may be eaten with impunity by any one who may

think proper to venture upon so untempting a little morsel.

SECTION VI.

HOW TO MAKE FISH CURRY.

It may be laid down as a general rule, that every kind of fish that is adapted for stewing, may be converted into a curry; and added to this, fish that have been already dressed may also be pressed into the service, and all kinds mixed together, which, so far from being in any way detrimental, will be rather an improvement to the whole.

The foundation of all fish curries should be a rich fish-gravy, made with the bones, heads, and some portions of the flesh either of the same, or of some other kinds of fish adapted to the purpose, prepared as before directed.* To this should be added about twice the quantity of fried onions that are used in preparing the stewed fish, to which you may also add a clove or two of garlie; add to this a tea-spoonful of Cornubian sauce, a dessert spoonful of curry powder, and a piece of butter rolled in flour.

Having half fried your fish as for stewing,

* See page 197.

place it in a stewpan, pour in the gravy, and let the whole stew slowly the same time you would allow for stewing in the ordinary way. Then, having your rice prepared and nicely boiled, serve it up in a separate dish from the curry.

Some attention is requisite in boiling the rice. The best and most simple plan is to boil the rice gently until sufficiently done; and then, throwing off all the water from it, place the saucepan either on a stove, or in an oven, or over the fire, until the grains separate.

To curry Prawns.

Boil an onion in a small quantity of water, until it is reduced to a pulp; in this stew the heads and shells of the prawns, as before directed*; and, having strained off the liquor, throw it into a stewpan, and let it warm gently until it simmers; then put in the prawns, with a spoonful of curry powder and a tea-spoonful of Cornubian sauce. Let the whole simmer for about two minutes, stirring the whole well together. Serve them up with boiled rice.

To curry Lobsters.

Stew your lobster, as before directed; and, when it begins to simmer, add to it a tea-spoonful

* See page 224.

of Cornubian sauce, and double that quantity of curry powder. Let the whole simmer gently, stirring it well for about a couple of minutes, then throw the whole out upon a dish covered with rice.

SECTION VII.

HOW TO ROAST AND BAKE FISH.

Fish, whether for roasting or baking, are both prepared in much the same way ; and, therefore, we purpose treating of them together.

To bake a Cod's Head.

Fill a baking-dish with about a quart of water, or broth ; add to this an onion stuck with cloves, a piece of lemon peel, and a little grated horse-radish, a large spoonful of pepper, a little cayenne, some grated nutmeg, and a blade or two of mace.

Having prepared your fish as for boiling*, except that the head is not to be bound round with tape ; place this in the baking-dish, dredging well with flour that portion which remains above water, sticking also pieces of butter, of about the size of oysters, or larding it all over with small pieces of fat bacon or salt pork, and place the

* See page 160.

dish in an oven, and there let it remain until sufficiently baked. Then take up the fish, and place it carefully on a clean dish; and pour out the liquor from the baking-dish into a saucepan, adding to it a glass of wine or cider, or something less than half that quantity of vinegar, a few oysters, either fresh or pickled, chopped up in small pieces (if in summer, when oysters cannot be procured, substitute cockles or mussels); add a tea-spoonful of the ketchup, soy, or half the quantity of Cornubian sauce, and a piece of butter well coated with flour. The whole must be kept well stirred together until it boils, and must then be poured into the dish over the fish. Garnish with fried bread and sliced lemon.

To roast a Cod's Head.

Boil a cod's head and shoulders until it is about half done. Then, taking it up, strip all the skin carefully off, and place it before a brisk fire, basting it well with butter, and dredging it over with flour; and, as soon as the froth rises, strew fine bread-crumbs over it, and continue basting until the fish is thoroughly done. Then serve it up, garnished with fried parsley, or scraped horseradish, and sliced lemon around the border of the dish.

Oyster sauce may also be served up with it.

Another Way.

After preparing, parboiling, and stripping off the skin as in the last receipt, dredge over the fish with flour and lard it with pieces of fat bacon; bake it in an oven until sufficiently done, and then brown it over with a salamander.

To bake a Pike.

Having well sealed and cleansed the fish, and cut off its fins, stuff the belly with a forcemeat pudding, prepared as before directed, and then place the tail in the mouth in the same manner as for stewing*; next lay the fish upon its belly in a baking-dish, flour it well, and stick it over with pieces of butter of the size of oysters, or lard it with pieces of fat bacon. Then place it in a common oven, or what perhaps is still better, a Dutch oven before the fire, basting it occasionally with the dripping that comes from it. When done, take out the fish and place it on a clean dish; and then adding a squeeze of lemon, a little soy or ketchup, and a little melted butter, stir up the whole well together, and pour it into the dish with the fish.

* See page 211.

To bake Hake, Ling, Bass, Cream, and Gurnards.

Any of these fishes may be baked with a pudding in their bellies, in the same way as a pike; but with the exception of the hake and ling, the rest must lie upon their sides, being of too bulky a make to permit their tails being fixed in their mouths.

Ling, as also conger, are, however, usually baked cut up in portions in the same way as for stewing*; but in all other respects are cooked and served up in the way we have just before pointed out.

To bake Fish in Fillets.

Take any of the fish we have last mentioned, as also any kind of flat-fish you like; cut off the head, and after skinning, splitting, and boning them, roll them up in fillets; flour them, and stick them with butter, or lard them with fat bacon, and bake them in an oven, or in a Dutch oven before the fire. Make a fish-gravy out of the head and bones†, and pour it over the fish. Serve it up with plain melted butter.

Another Mode.

Having skinned and boned the fish as before directed, coat it well on both sides with egg and

* See page 213.

† See page 197.

bread-crums, mixed with a little parsley shred very fine; then have ready some bearded oysters chopped up, place these between the rolls, and bind up the fish in fillets; season them with a little cayenne, nutmeg, and a tolerable quantity of pepper and salt, and bake them as in the former receipt. Serve up with oyster-sauce.

To bake Hake on Potatoes.

Take a large baking-dish; rub the bottom of it well with fat bacon, and then dredge it with plenty of flour; next, peel a sufficient quantity of potatoes to cover the bottom of the dish; after which, take the body of a hake, the head being first cut off and the backbone extracted*, and having well seasoned the inside with pepper and salt, spread the fish over the potatoes with the back uppermost, which must be larded over with bacon, and thoroughly dredged over with flour. It must then be committed to the oven; and, when done, served up hot in the same dish in which it was baked.

Any other kind of fish we have pointed out as adapted for baking, may be prepared in the same manner, and affords an excellent dish at a cost

* See page 143.

seldom exceeding a shilling, sufficient to satisfy at least have a dozen hungry mouths.

To bake Carp.

Having sealed the fish and cut off the fins, lay it in a baking-dish, and pour over it sufficient wine (whether red or white is immaterial) to cover the fish; season with cloves, nutmeg, mace, cayenne pepper, and salt; add to this a bundle of sweet herbs and an anchovy, or a small quantity of anchovy sauee, and bake the whole for about an hour in an oven; then pouring off the liquor into a sauecpan, add to it some butter rolled in flour, a squeeze of lemon, and boil up the whole together, taking care to keep it well stirred all the time; then plaeing the fish in a clean dish, pour the sauee over it. A basse, gray mullet, hake, or sea bream, is exceedingly good dressed in the same way.

If you are desirous to save a portion of the wine, you may substitute an equal quantity of cider with the wine; or, instead of the eider, the same proportion of a good fish-gravy prepared as before directed.*

To bake Salmon.

First, scale the fish; then, taking out the backbone, chop up some shrimps and oysters,

* See page 197.

mixing these with bread-crumbs and a little parsley chopped up very fine, and seasoning with a little cayenne, common pepper, and salt; roll up the whole tight, and, after dredging well with flour, stick it about with butter, or lard it well with fat bacon; and, placing the fish in a baking-dish, bake it in a quick oven. Mix the gravy that comes from the fish with a little butter rolled in flour, and then placing the fish in a clean dish, pour the gravy over it. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon.

Another Way.

Take either the middle piece or tail end of a salmon, dredge it thoroughly with flour, and, binding it round with a piece of tape, hang it up to a bottle-jack, or fix it in a cradle-spit, or in a Dutch oven, and let it roast before a good fire, basting it from time to time with butter. When done, finish off the gravy as in the foregoing receipt, and serve up the fish in the same way as there directed.

To bake Eels, Congers, and Lampreys.

Eels must be must be previously skinned, as before directed*; but either of the two latter, if used, must retain their skins. The heads of either

* See page 148.

kinds, as also the tails below the vent, must not be used. Fill the belly with a forcemeat pudding, and sew it up; flour the fish well, and stick it over with pieces of butter, or lard it with fat bacon, and place it in a baking-dish; make a gravy or broth with the heads and tails and pour it into the dish with the fish, and bake it in a moderate oven. When done, pour off the gravy; and, after skimming off the fat, strain it through a sieve; add to it a tea-spoonful of lemon pickle, twice that quantity of ketchup, an anchovy, and a slice of lemon; let the whole boil up together for a few minutes, shaking in at the same time a little butter and flour, to thicken it; then turn the fish into a clean dish, and pour the gravy over it. Garnish with sliced lemon and fried parsley.

To roast a Conger.

Take about seven or eight pounds of the middle portion of a conger; and having prepared and enclosed a forcemeat pudding in its belly, and dredging it with flour, and sticking it over with butter or larding it with fat bacon, fix it with some splints to a spit, or suspend it to a bottle-jack before the fire, and there let it roast until done, basting it from time to time with the gravy that comes from it, and occasionally dredging it over lightly with flour. When done, take

it up in a clean dish. Then add to the gravy that has come from the fish, some gravy or broth produced from some of the other parts of the conger prepared as previously directed *; and if this proves at all thin, thicken it with a little butter rubbed in flour, or a proportionate quantity of cream, to which add a tea-spoonful of Cornubian or anchovy sauce, or double that quantity of soy or ketchup.

To roast Sturgeon.

Sturgeon is considerably improved by lying in salt and water for six or eight hours before it is cooked; then cleanse it well, fix it on a spit, and baste it well with butter whilst roasting, dredging it lightly from time to time with flour, and when half done, have prepared some fine-grated bread, with a few sweet herbs and a little parsley chopped up very fine, which being cast over it will, by the aid of the butter and flour, adhere to the fish; when done enough, take it up and place it in a clean dish; and pour over it a sauce prepared according to the instructions of the celebrated Mrs. Glasse; viz., a pint of water, an anchovy, a small bit of lemon peel, an onion, a bundle of sweet herbs, mace, cloves, whole pepper, black

* See page 197.

and white, and a piece of horseradish; cover it close, let it boil a quarter of an hour, then after straining it, return it again to the saucepan, pour in a pint of white wine, about a dozen oysters and their liquor, two spoonsful of ketchup, two of walnut pickle, the inside of a crab bruised fine, or some pieees of lobster or shrimps, a pieee of butter rolled in flour, a spoonful of mushroom pickle, or juiec of lemon; let all simmer together, and when the fish is dished, pour the sauce over it. Garnish with fried bread and sliced lemon.

Another Mode.

Another mode is to take a piece of sturgeon of the proportionate size required; and after plunging it in water and salt, as we have just before directed, and washing it clean, to parboil it; and then, stripping off all the skin, to roast it preeisely according to the preceding directions, and serve it up with the same sauces.

To roast Salmon.

This fish can be roasted either entire or cut up in portions, and may be done either in a Dutch oven or in a eradle-spit; or it may be tied with splints to a common spit, or suspended to a bottle-jack. It should previously be sealed; and whilst roasting, should be basted with butter,

and occasionally dredged with flour. It is sometimes the practice to strip off the skin, and supply its place with a coating of egg and bread-crumbs; but we consider the former to be the better plan; as, by retaining the skin, you keep in and retain the rich moisture, which, if permitted to escape, causes the fish to eat too dry to be pleasing to most palates. Add a little melted butter and a glass or two of wine to the gravy that drips from the fish; and warming this up in a saucepan, place the fish in a dish, and pour the gravy over it. Garnish with fried parsley and sliced lemon.

SECTION VIII.

FISH PIES AND PATTIES.

Fish pies are a valuable addition to a bill of fare; and the Cornish people have so great a predilection for this particular branch of cookery, that there are few fish found upon their coasts that are not applied to this purpose. Some fishes are, however, much better adapted to it than others, as they ought to possess a firm muscle, and be as free as possible from bones; but tender fish, such as whiting, however delicious when cooked in a way to which they are adapted,

make very bad pies ; and should never, therefore, be devoted to that purpose.

Eel Pie.

Prepare your eels as for frying*, and cut them up in the same manner ; season them with a little cayenne, common pepper, and salt, and pour in sufficient water nearly to fill the dish ; and placing on a lid of crust, bake them until they are thoroughly done. Then take off the lid, and pour in some cream proportioned to the size of the pie ; and instantly replacing the crust, the cream will mix up with the gravy, and make it just what it ought to be. Some use butter ; but this is not near so good as cream, being apt to make the gravy very oily, and thus renders it as unpleasant to the taste as to the sight.

Conger Pie.

This is prepared in much the same way as in the last receipt, except that the tail portion, on account of the numerous bones with which it is interspersed, had better be left out. When the pie is done, some portion of the gravy should be poured out before the cream is put in, as a much greater portion of liquid will be found to exude

* See page 148.

from a conger than an eel when undergoing the baking process shut up in a pie.

Hake Pie.

Hake, when intended for a pie, should be cut up in cutlets, as for frying* ; and being placed in a pie-dish, and seasoned with a little cayenne pepper and salt, should be baked in the same manner as an eel pie, and with the addition of cream to enrich the gravy. If you wish to save the cream, then have a fish gravy prepared beforehand, and, allowing it to become cold, pour this over the cutlets when placed in the dish, before putting on the lid and committing it to the oven.

Bass Pie.

Bass make an excellent pie, being prepared in much the same way as the hake, with this difference, that the former fish, instead of being cut up in cutlets, is cut up in thick steaks through the backbone ; and all the roots of the fins should be cut out, the bones of which would otherwise prove exceedingly troublesome. Any of the larger kind of gurnards, as also ling, may be prepared to advantage in the same way.

Sea-Bream Pie.

These fish are usually put in whole, being

* See page 180.

first very carefully sealed, and the fins cut out by the roots. Wrass are also cooked in the same manner; but as they are exceedingly watery, the whole of the liquid coming from the fish should be strained off and a good supply of cream substituted in its place, so as to make these fishes as palatable as circumstances will admit. Bream pie, however, is excellent; but wrass pie we certainly cannot praise.

Salmon Pie.

Cut up the fish in cutlets, in the same manner as a hake is done; lay the pieces in a pie-dish, the bottom of which must be well rubbed with butter; season with cayenne, common pepper, and salt; add some bruised shrimps, or some portions of lobster, and fill up the pie about half full with water. Then, with the salmon bones, head, and any other ingredients you have at hand, make a good fish gravy; and when the pie is done, open the lid and pour the gravy into it.

Flat-fish Pie.

Any kind of flat-fish is suited for a pie; but of all these the sole is by far the best. For this purpose the largest-sized fish of the kind are to be preferred. These must be cut, in cutlets, carefully from the bones, and placed in layers in

the pie-dish, each layer being seasoned with cayenne, plenty of common pepper, a little grated nutmeg and ground mace, and between each layer must be placed some oysters deprived of their beards, or a few bruised shrimps; the beards and liquor of the former, or the heads and shells of the latter, being previously boiled up with the head and bones of the sole, until all the goodness is extracted, the whole is poured into the pie-dish, over the outlets, which are then to be covered over with a crust and thoroughly baked, and when done the lid must be lifted up, and a quantity of cream, proportioned to the size of the pie, poured into it, and the lid again closed down to permit the cream to become thoroughly mixed up with the gravy whilst the latter remains boiling hot. This we consider the best of all fish pies, and may be eaten either hot or cold.

Pilchard Pie in the Cornish mode.

Carefully seale your pilehards, which you must take care to ascertain are perfectly fresh, and having sealded a few leeks, place them in about equal proportions with the pilehards in the pie-dish, with sufficient water nearly to fill the dish; and when baked enough, open the lid, drain off all the liquor, and pour in some cream or new milk.

Salt-fish Pie.

Prepare your fish as for stewing*, and when it will bear it pull it in picces with a fork; and having four or five hard-boiled eggs chopped up fine, season the whole with cayenne and common pepper, and then fill up the dish with as much milk as it will contain; when the pie is baked, lift the lid, pour a little cream into it, and close it up again immediately.

Lobster Pie.

Prepare your lobsters in the same way as for stewing†; and if the lobster be a female, beat up the coral and spawn in a mortar. This being done, cast all you have picked out, both great and small together, into a stewpan, with a small quantity of water, veal broth, or thin fish gravy, three tea-spoonfuls of vinegar, and a good-sized piece of butter rubbed in flour; season with cayenne, pepper, salt, a small quantity of grated nutmeg, and pounded mace. Let all these ingredients warm very gently over a slow fire, until the mixture begins to simmer; then put the whole into a very shallow pie dish, and cover it with a rich crust, and bake it until the paste is done, when it will be ready for the table.

* See page 221.

† See page 222.

Lobster Patties.

Prepare the lobster as in the last receipt, only that the tail part should be broken up in rather smaller portions. If you intend to have small patties, bake up some fine puff paste in patty-pans, the bottoms of which you must well butter, otherwise the patties will stiek to them. Fill up the space between the pastry and that which the lobster is intended eventually to occupy, with a small piece of bread, in order to preserve a sufficient hollow space for the latter purpose. Then place the patties in the oven, and whilst the baking process goes on warm up your lobster with the necessary ingredients in a stewpan, taking care it never quite reaches to the boiling point; and when the patties are baked enough, lift up the lid of each, and, carefully extracting the bread, pour the lobster, and a proportionate quantity of the liquid in which it was stewed, into the hollow place the bread previously occupied.

If a larger patty is required, then of course the bread inserted must be proportioned to it, although, in the larger-sized patties, it is a more common practice to dispense with the lid, or cover, altogether; but, in either case, the bread should be inserted to preserve the space the lobster is designed to occupy.

Shrimp and Prawn Patties.

Prepare your patties as directed in the last receipt; and, having stewed the shrimps or prawns in the way we have previously pointed out* (but of course omitting the onions), pour them, with their sauce, into the patties; serve them up folded in a napkin, to keep them hot. They may, however, be eaten cold, and in the latter form make an excellent dish for a supper table.

Oyster Patties.

Having bearded your oysters, boil up the beards and hard parts in the liquor till all their strength is extracted, and the bulk of liquid considerably reduced in quantity; then strain it through a hair sieve, and, having cut up the remaining portion of your oysters into small pieces, throw them, together with the strained liquor, into a stewpan; season with cayenne, common pepper, salt, a little nutmeg, and grated lemon-peel. Let the whole warm gradually until it begins to simmer; then throw in a sufficient quantity of cream to thicken it, and keep turning until it is thoroughly mixed together, and then pour the contents into your patties. Be not too

* See page 224.

sparing of your cream, for, depend upon it, milk and flour will never answer the purpose, whatever strict economists may assure you to the contrary.

Sometimes oysters are put in whole, instead of being chopped up; and when they are very fine, a single oyster only is placed in a patty of a proportionate size, the gravy being filled in with it; and a number of these patties are placed one above another, thus forming a kind of pyramid, which has a very pleasing appearance, and looks exceedingly well upon a supper table.

Another mode.

A delicious patty may be made by mixing up chopped portions of veal sweetbread with oysters, in about equal quantities, the oysters prepared according to the foregoing receipt.

SECTION IX.

FISH SOUPS.

Fish soups, although not very often used, are many of them excellent, and almost any kind of fish may be turned to profitable account in this way, and this even after having been previously

cooked, particularly if a little meat broth can be procured; and many heads, bones, and portions of fish that are carelessly thrown away and wasted, might with little trouble have assisted in the form of a very delicious soup, in helping out the following day's dinner. Several kinds of fish may be mixed up together, which in fact is generally an improvement, some giving strength and nourishment, and others imparting a flavour to the soup, as in the receipt following.

Fish Soup.

Take about two pounds of eels or eongers, one pound of crimped skate, and about the same weight of flounders, or any other kind of flat-fish or gurnards, cleanse them properly, cut them up in pieces, and fry them in butter until they are about half-done; then place them in a boiler, in about three pints of water or meat broth; having first seasoned the pieces with cayenne, common pepper, and salt, add a bundle of sweet herbs and parsley, and let the whole stew for several hours, so that not only all the strength and goodness may be extracted from the fish, but that the liquid may be reduced to about one-third of its original quantity. Whilst the stewing is going on, fry a couple of onions, coated with flour,

in the butter in which the fish was previously fried, until thoroughly brown, and then throw them into the soup, together with the butter in which they were fried. Thicken with a little flour and butter, and add a little ketchup, soy, or Cornubian sauce. Then pour out the contents, and strain them through a hair sieve or eullender into a basin, and there allow them to get cold, when all the fat which accumulates upon the surface should be removed; when wanted for use, the soup may be again warmed up. You may add vermicelli or macaroni to the soup.

Conger Soup, in the Jersey mode.

Take five pounds of conger to three pints of water, cut the former up into small pieces and place them in a boiler with the water, until the liquid is reduced to about two-thirds of its original quantity; then strain it off through a hair sieve or eullender; add to it the same quantity of new milk as there is of soup, and warm this up again; throw in some green peas, which should be boiled up in the soup until thoroughly done, and then the peas and soup must be served up together.

To make Conger Soup in imitation of Turtle.

Prepare the soup as in the first receipt, and then cut off some belly-pieces of a large conger

into pieces of about an inch square, and fry them in butter until about one-half done, and then throw the pieces, with the butter in which they were fried, into the prepared soup, in which they must be allowed to stew until thoroughly done; thicken the soup with butter rolled in flour, or a proportionate quantity of cream, give a squeeze of lemon, and add to this forcemeat and egg-balls.

Oyster Soup.

Make a soup according to first receipt, and when it is strained off, beat up the yolks of ten hard eggs, with the hard part of a pint of oysters, in a mortar, and cast this, with the liquor and the remaining portions of the oysters, into the soup, and let the whole simmer together for about half an hour; then have ready the yolks of six raw eggs, well beaten, and add them to the soup; keep the mixture stirring over the fire until it becomes thick and smooth, allowing it only to simmer slowly, and on no account to boil.

Mussel Soup.

Stew the mussels in the liquor which comes from them, into which must be thrown some butter rolled in flour, some parsley, and a bundle of sweet herbs; allow them to simmer

until the liquid is reduced to about one-half its original quantity ; then strain off the liquor, and mix it with some soup prepared according to the first receipt, and after warming up the whole, throw in the mussels, and serve up the latter together with the soup.

Eel Soup.

Take some fresh-water eels, skinned and cut up in the same way as for frying*, and to every pound-weight of fish put a quart of water, some whole pepper, an onion, and a bundle of sweet herbs ; add a little soy, ketchup, or Cornubian sauce, and let the whole stew gently until half the liquor is wasted. Fry an onion or two in butter, and when done brown throw it, with the butter, into the soup. Strain the soup as before directed, and having some pieces of toasted bread cut up in small pieces in a tureen, pour the soup over them.

Lobster and Crayfish Soup.

Take three quarts of strong veal broth made without herbs, the crumb of four French rolls, the flesh of a lobster, or sea crayfish, or a proportionate quantity of river crayfish or of prawns, pound up the whole in a mortar, together with the coral

* See page 181.

and spawn, if any; season with cayenne, common pepper, and salt; add a glass of wine, or half that quantity of vinegar, and a slight squeeze of lemon; let the whole stew gently for about half an hour, and serve it up with a French roll, stuck full of almonds, floating in the tureen.

SECTION X.

TWICE-LAID DISHES OF FISH.

Although any portions of fish that are left unconsumed are usually considered so worthless as to be thrown away and wasted, they may always be turned to some, and very often really profitable, account. The smallest portions may assist in making fish soups or enriching gravies, and the larger may often be submitted to some process of cookery by which they may be rendered quite as agreeable as when first produced in the way they were originally cooked.

To fry Turbot, Soles, or Dories that have been previously dressed.

Take as much of these fishes as you can entire, in one solid piece, from the bones; coat them with egg and bread-crumbs, and fry them in plenty of dripping until they become a fine pale

brown. Serve them up with melted butter, anchovy or Cornubian sauce, soy, or ketchup.

You may, if you please, substitute batter prepared according to the directions before given*, as a substitute for the egg and bread-crumbs.

We have only enumerated soles and turbot, but any other kind of flat-fish may be prepared in the same way.

To fry cold Cod, Ling, &c.

Any portion of cod or ling that may be left cold must be separated, so as to be divided by the flakes in pieces of about half an inch in thickness, and being coated either in egg and bread-crumbs or in batter, may be fried as in the last receipt, and served up with plain melted butter, oyster sauce, vinegar, mustard, soy, ketchup, anchovy, or Cornubian sauce.

Another mode.

Pull the fish completely to pieces with a fork, picking out the bones, and mix it up thoroughly with an equal proportion of mashed potatoes; add to this four or five hard eggs chopped up fine, mixed with a raw egg and a small quantity of melted butter, just enough to bind the whole together; make them up in small flat cakes, of

* See page 195.

about an inch in thickness, or mould them into the form of sausages; fry them brown, and serve them up with plain melted butter and mustard.

Fish Sausages.

Take any previously-dressed fish, and, after carefully extracting all the bones, mince it up fine, season with cayenne, common pepper and salt, and mix up with it a sufficient quantity of raw beaten egg, to bind the whole together; make the mixture up into the form of sausages, or of small balls. Fry them brown, and serve them up with plain melted butter; bread-crumbs, or cold mashed potatoes, may be mixed up with the fish, and they may also be coated with bread-crumbs, by rubbing a little raw egg about the outside of the balls or sausages, and then strewing the bread-crumbs over them.

Fish that has been previously stewed, particularly skate, the gravy that is left being mixed up with the fish, are really delicious prepared in this manner.

Oyster Sausages.

These are prepared by chopping up some veal very fine, then pounding it in a mortar, and chopping up an equal proportion of oysters very small, all of which are mixed up with bread-crumbs and a little beef suet, and moistened with

some of the liquor taken from the oysters, the whole being bound together by means of an egg beaten up, and being previously seasoned with cayenne, common pepper, salt, and a little beaten mace, is moulded into the form of sausages or balls, and fried in butter.

Lobster Balls, or Sausages.

Take the flesh of a lobster, together with the coral and spawn, if any, and pound the whole in a mortar, adding to it bread-crumbs to about one-quarter the proportion of the lobster; season with cayenne, common pepper, salt, and bruised mace. Mix up a little melted butter with the other ingredients, and, making it up into balls or sausages, coat the latter with egg and bread-crumb, and fry them of a fine pale brown.

Potting is also an excellent way of turning cold fish to good account; but this subject belongs properly to the next section, and will be there fully entered upon.

SECTION XI.

POTTING, SCOLLOPING, PICKLING, AND MARINATING.

To pot Lobster cold.

For this purpose a hen lobster is the best suited. Mix up the coral and spawn, and the pickings

about the head, and all the flesh from the claws, in a mortar, seasoning it with cayenne, common pepper, salt, and bruised mace; add to this some thick melted butter, until the whole becomes one entire paste; then take the meat from the tail, taking care to extract and cast away the black gut which runs down through it, and beat it up in like manner; then put one-half of the last-pounded meat in the bottom of the pot, the part from the head and claws in the middle, and the remaining half from the tail portion upon the top; and cover the whole with clarified butter.

To pot Lobster hot.

Prepare and pound the meat from the head and claws as in the last receipt, but omitting the butter; then break up the flesh from the tail in small pieces, but do not pound it; press the latter in a deep baking dish, cover it with butter, and bake it for about half an hour; then take it out and let it cool, and when it becomes so, turn it out into pots, spread the pounded parts on the top, and pour clarified butter over it.

To pot Lobsters according to Mrs. Kaffald's receipt, which cost ten guineas.

The authoress above alluded to, in her edition of "The Experienced English Housekeeper,"

published in the year 1787, presents her readers with the following valuable receipt:—

“Take twenty good lobsters, and when cold pick out all the meat from the tail and claws (be careful to take out the black gut in the tails, which must not be used); beat fine three quarters of an ounce of mace, a small nutmeg, and four or five cloves, with pepper and salt; season the meat with it; lay a layer of butter in a deep earthen pot, then put in the lobsters, and lay the rest of the butter over them (this quantity of lobsters will take at least four pounds of butter to bake them); tie a paper over the pot; set them in an oven; when they are baked tender, take them out, and lay them on a dish to drain a little; then pot them close down in your potting-pots, but do not break them in small pieces, but lay them in as whole as you can, only splitting the tails. When you have filled your pots as full as you choose, take a spoonful or two of the red butter they were baked in, pour it on the top, and set it before the fire to let it melt in; then cool it and melt a little white wax in the remainder of the butter, and cover them. N.B.—Lay a good deal of the red, hard part in the pot to bake, to colour the butter, but do not put it into the potting-pans.”

By adopting the above plan a sufficient quan-

tity of lobsters may be preserved to be in readiness for immediate use, of which you may always avail yourself when unable otherwise to obtain a lobster of any kind either for love or money.

Another way.

Split the tail and extract the black gut of one or two lobsters, which should be only parboiled; butter the bottom of a baking-dish and place your pieces flat in it, seasoning them with a little cayenne, allspice, nutmeg, white pepper and salt; then placing bay-leaves between each piece of lobster, cover the whole with butter and bake them in a slow oven. When done, press down the lobster by placing another dish that fits the upper parts of the baking-dish, filling the former with heavy weights, and keeping up this pressure for at least six or eight hours; then take out the lobster and throw away the bay-leaves, and then, filling your pots with the portions of lobster, cover the whole with clarified butter.

To pot Crayfish.

This should be done in the same way as before directed for lobsters, for in every way in which the latter may be done the former may be done also, with only this simple difference, that a crayfish being often of a more watery nature than a

lobster, the flesh of the former should be squeezed between two plates, so as to press off all the water before it is placed in the pots; but this latter course of proceeding will be unnecessary when the baking process, as mentioned in the preceding receipt, is resorted to.

To pot Prawns, Shrimps, and river Crayfish.

Bruise up the tail portions, which must be extracted from the shells, and mixing them up with a little melted butter, and seasoning with a little cayenne, common pepper, salt, and a very little bruised mace, place them in pots and pour clarified butter over them. If there is any coral or spawn, this should be all picked out and mixed up with the other parts.

Another mode.

Pound the parts you have extracted from the shells in a mortar, and mix them up into a paste with a little butter; season as in the last receipt, and, putting the meat in a pot, cover it over with clarified butter.

A third way.

Put the tails of the prawns, as whole as you can extract them from their shells, into the pots in which they are to be baked; and if there is

any coral in the heads, or eggs, these should be inserted to fill up the spaces; then season as before directed, and pressing down the contents, cover over with butter, and let the whole bake in a slow oven from about ten minutes to a quarter of an hour. When perfectly cold, turn all out into a fresh pot in which they are to make their appearance at table, and, pressing them down close, pour clarified butter over them.

To pot Crab

Mix up the white flesh of the body and claws with about one-fourth the same quantity of the cream of the crab; season with cayenne, common pepper, bruised mace, and salt; place the mixture in a pot, and pour melted butter over it.

To pot cold Fish.

Almost every kind of cold fish may be made available in this way, but those fish which are the firmest and most free from bones are the best adapted to the purpose; any parts may be used that are free from bones, and the pickings about the head and fins of a ling or codfish, the skin and sound chopped up small, all come in most advantageously for this purpose. This mode is as simple and easy as it is economical and useful. All you have to do is to pull the solid parts of the fish to pieces with a fork, and to pick out the

other parts by the same means ; mix up the whole in a basin, with a little melted butter, seasoning with cayenne, common pepper, salt, and a little bruised mace ; and, placing the mixture in pots, pour clarified butter over it. A few minutes are often sufficient to complete the whole process.

The fish we have usually employed in this way are ling, cod, hake, conger, basse, bream, mackerel, ray, turbot, and flat-fish of all kinds, and every one of them has given satisfaction ; but as each gives a different flavour to the preparation, it is difficult to say which of them is the best. It may be prepared from cold fish cooked in every possible way ; and, if made from fish that has been either previously stewed or curried, any gravy that is left should be mixed up with the fish, which will serve still further to enhance the richness of the flavour.

When prepared in this way, with a little parsley strewed over the top, it presents a tempting appearance either at a breakfast or a supper table, and is also admirably adapted for a luncheon or a pic-nic.

Char, Trout, and Chads.

Gut and scale your fish, and cut off their heads and fins ; then season each fish well with pepper, salt, allspice, and a little cayenne ; spread them

open and lay them in layers, with their backs uppermost, in a baking-dish, into which you must then pour sufficient clarified butter to cover them, and tying paper over the dish, bake them all night in a very slow oven, for if the oven is too hot the fish will become baked up dry, and utterly spoiled; but by baking slowly the bones turn to a soft gristle, and afford no impediment whatever to the eating of the fish. It will be necessary, therefore, to examine the fish before you finally take them up, to see that the bones have become properly softened, which even several hours' baking, where the oven is very cool, will not accomplish; still it will not do to risk them in an oven too hot; and therefore, if they do not bake enough in one night, give them a few hours more baking, until you find they are thoroughly done and the bones have acquired the desired consistency. Then allow the fish to become cold, and place a baking-dish, with weights upon that containing them, in the way we have before directed for potting lobsters*, and keep up a heavy pressure for six or eight hours, then turn out your fish, and laying them in layers in pots, press them down tight and pour clarified butter over them. If you wish to keep them for any length of time, pour melted mutton suet over

* See page 258.

them instead of clarified butter, and when you intend to use them take off the mutton covering, and, scraping away the portion of fish that has come into immediate contact with it, pour over clarified butter in its stead.

Another way.

Having prepared your fish as before directed, dry them in a cloth; next lay them on a board or stone, and strew a quantity of salt over them, and let it remain for six or eight hours; then rub it gently off, wiping the fish afterwards carefully with a cloth, and then seasoning them with bruised mace, ground cloves, and grated nutmeg on the inside, but with pepper and salt only on the outside, put them into a deep pot, with their bellies uppermost, and pour in sufficient clarified butter to cover them; bake them for five or six hours in a slow oven. When they are dressed, lay a board over them, and turn them upside down, to let the gravy run from them; scrape the salt and pepper very carefully off, and season them exceedingly well, both inside and out, with the above seasoning; then lay them close in broad thin pots, with the backs uppermost, and cover them with clarified butter.

To pot Salmon.

Having well sealed the fish, split it into outlets, wipe them with a clean dry cloth, but do not wash them; then season with cayenne, pepper, allspice, and a little salt, and place the outlets in layers in a baking-dish, with some bay-leaves betwixt each layer, over which pour clarified butter sufficient to cover the whole; bake in a slow oven for about three hours. When done, drain off the oil and gravy that exudes from the fish, and then press the fish in the same way we have previously directed a lobster to be done*; next press it down tight into pots, and cover it with clarified butter.

To pot Salmon that has been previously dressed.

Take any portion of cold salmon, clear it from the bones, and pick it in pieces with a fork; season with allspice, pepper, and salt; add to this some thick melted butter, so as to make it into a paste, but without moistening it too much; then press the mixture into a pot, and pour clarified butter over it. Some of the coral and eggs of a lobster, and bruised portions of the latter, or bruised shrimps or prawns, are a valuable addition, and greatly improve both the appearance and flavour.

* See page 258.

To pot Mackerel, Gurnards, Basse, Mullet, &c.

Split your fish and extract the backbone, and if the fish are large divide them into four parts, if small into two; season them in the same manner as trout and char* are directed to be done, and placing the pieces in a baking-dish, cover them with clarified butter, and cover the dish with paper; bake them for about two hours in an oven moderately heated, and after allowing them to become cold, press them between two baking-dishes, at the same time draining off all the gravy that comes from them; then place them in pots, and cover them with clarified butter. Besides the fish we have above enumerated, any other kind of solid and firm fish may be prepared in the same way.

To pot Eels.

Having skinned your eels, split them in two, and take out the backbone; cut them in pieces two or three inches long; season with a little cayenne, allspice, grated nutmeg, pepper, salt, and a small quantity of sage rubbed very fine; place the pieces of eel in layers in a baking-dish, over which you must pour sufficient clarified butter to cover them, and then tie paper over the top and bake them in a tolerably quick oven

* See page 262.

for about an hour and a half. When cold, take them out, press them into pots and pour clarified butter over them.

To pot Congers.

Congers must not be skinned, but in other respects must be cut up in the same way as freshwater eels; they will, however, require to be done in a very slow oven, in which they should be allowed to bake for eight or ten hours, until all the numerous fine bones which abound so much in the tail portions of eongers are dissolved to a gristle. When done, press them and strain off the liquor that comes from them, and place them in pots as in the preceeding receipt.

To pot Lampreys.

Lampreys may be potted in the same way as eels are before directed to be done; in addition to which the following mode is often adopted:—The lampreys being well wiped upon the outside, so as thoroughly to cleanse away the slime, are then split open below the gill-holes, and the gristle that stands them instead of a backbone carefully extraeted; they are then cut off below the gills, and the portions intended to be potted well rubbed with pepper and salt, and so allowed to remain for ten or twelve hours. They are

then wiped dry, again seasoned with pepper, salt, bruised mace, and a little grated nutmeg, and rolled up in a fillet, and in that form put into a pot, sufficient clarified butter being poured in to fill up the crevices and cover the fish; paper is then tied over the pot, and they are baked for about three hours in a moderately heated oven; when nearly cold, they are slightly pressed, and the gravy drained from them, and when quite cold they are put into pots, and clarified butter poured over them.

To scollop Lobster.

Having extracted the lobster from the shell, break it into very small pieces, mixing up the coral and eggs, if any, with it; season with cayenne, common pepper, bruised mace, and salt, and place the mixture in scollop-shells; then break up the shells and claws of the lobster, and place these in a small quantity of water, and let the whole stew until reduced to about one-half its original quantity; then strain off the liquor in a small saucepan, and thicken it with a piece of butter rolled in flour, and pour sufficient of this into the scollop-shells to moisten the whole contents; then sprinkle bread-crums over the top, and bake the scollops in a dutch-oven before the fire; and when done, brown over the bread-

crumbs with a salamander, and serve up in the scollop-shells.

To dress a Crab, cold.

Crabs are best done in their own shells, when intended to be eaten cold. To do this, extract all the flesh from the claws and body, taking care to pick out every particle of shell; mix the whole together with a good quantity of mustard and vinegar, a little cayenne, common pepper, and salt; and having thoroughly cleansed the back shell, fill it up with the mixture, which should be eaten cold, without any further dressing.

To dress a Crab, hot.

Mix your crab, as in the preceding receipt, but add to it about one-fourth the proportion of bread-crumbs, mixed up with it, and several pieces of butter stuck amongst it; put this mixture either into the back shell of the crab, or into scollop-shells, which must be baked before a fire or in an oven; and, when done, brown over with a salamander, and serve up in the crab or scollop shells.

Scolloped Oysters.

Place a layer of bread-crumbs in scollop-shells, the bottoms of which should be previously well

rubbed with butter; then, having bearded a sufficient quantity of oysters, place them in layers upon the bread-crumbs; season them well with pepper and salt, and place a number of small pieces of butter between the layers; then arrange another layer of bread-crumbs, butter, and oysters, until the shells are quite filled up, and cover the whole with bread-crumbs, and a few more pieces of butter upon the top of all. Bake before the fire, or in an oven, and, when done enough, brown them over the top with a salamander, and serve up in the shells.

Mussels, cockles, and every edible kind of shellfish, may be prepared in the above manner.

To pickle undressed Salmon.

Scale the fish, and rub it well with a dry cloth, and scrape out the blood carefully from the backbone, but wash it not; then cut off its head, and cut up its body into two or three pieces, across; then boil the fish in equal proportions of water and vinegar, with a few cloves and blades of mace, till it be done, taking care to skim off all the scum that comes upon the surface whilst boiling; then take up the fish, and allowing both that and the liquor in which it was boiled to become cold, add to it about one-third more

vinegar, a clove or two, and some whole pepper, and then replace the fish in the liquor.

Trout, salmon peel, basse, mullet, and mackerel, are all excellent when prepared in the above manner.

To pickle cold Salmon.

Boil up some portion of the water in which the fish was previously cooked; add to this about the same quantity of vinegar, and throw in a few whole peppercorns; as soon as the liquor begins to bubble take it off the fire, and place in it any previously-dressed cold salmon you may be desirous of preparing and preserving in this way. In case the salmon should not have been sufficiently done previously, then boil it up in the pickle until it becomes thoroughly dressed throughout.

Turbot, flat-fish of all kinds, basse, salmon peel, trout, mullet, ling, hake, gurnards, and in fact nearly, if not every kind of fish that is adapted for boiling, may be prepared in the way we have just pointed out; but with most of the latter a few bay-leaves boiled up with the pickle will be found a decided improvement.

To pickle Oysters.

In opening the oysters, take care to preserve

the liquor, add to this an equal quantity of vinegar, a glass of white wine, a blade or two of mace, some whole peppercorns, and a little salt; boil up this mixture for about five minutes, taking care to skim off all the scum; then put in the oysters, and let them simmer very gently for about ten minutes; then east them, with the liquor, into deep earthen pots, and tie them over tight with dried bladder, white leather, and paper, so as to exclude the external air until you require them for use.

To pickle Mussels and Cockles.

Extract the contents from the shells as previously directed.* If intended to be eaten immediately, throw in about one-third of vinegar in proportion to their own liquor; season with pepper and salt, and a little cayenne; let this get cold, and then cast in the mussels or cockles. If intended to keep for a longer period, you must then add three parts vinegar in proportion to the other liquor.

Water Souchy.

This may be prepared from most kinds of fishes, but perch, tench, and flounders are those usually employed for the purpose. The principal thing

* See page 225.

to be kept in view in preparing water souehy, is to extract every particle of goodness from one kind of fish to make a rich soup to dress those whose bodies are intended to be eaten. To aecomplish this object, you must take about one-half of the weight and quantity of the fish, and boil them to a mash in about two quarts of water and some broken parsley and parsley roots, until the greater portion of the flesh of the fish may be strained with the gravy through a cullender, which being done, add a little parsley chopped fine, and then place the remainder of the fish in the liquor; season with pepper and salt, and let the fish stew until thoroughly done, and then throw them, with the soup in which they have been stewed, into a tureen.

If you have large and small fish, or fish of various kinds, you should use the inferior and smaller ones for the soup, reserving the latter for the purpose of eooking and serving up whole.

Another way.

Scale, gut, and thoroughly eleanse your fish, put some salt into the water you purpose cooking it in; then separating an onion into round rings, throw these in, together with a handful of elean parsley; then add about as much milk as will

turn the water white, and boil the fish in this until they are done enough. Serve them up in a tureen with the soup, parsley, and onions.

A third way.

Prepare your fish as in the foregoing receipt, and then place them in a stewpan in a gravy made as follows:—melt some butter in a stewpan, then throw in a little boiling water, some sliced onions, a few slices of earrot or turnip, some parsley roots, a little Cornubian sauee, soy, or ketchup; season with pepper, salt, and a little allspice, and when the fish is nearly done, give a slight squeeze of lemon into the gravy; then give the whole a shake, and serve it up, gravy and all, in the same dish.

*To marinade Mackerel, Herrings, Pilchards,
Chads, &c.*

Cleanse your fish and cut off their heads; rub into the inside plenty of bruised mace or allspice, pepper, salt, some whole peppercorns, and a blade or two of mace; and then place them, in layers, in a baking-dish; put bay-leaves between the layers, and pour in about three-parts vinegar to one of water sufficient nearly to fill the dish. Bake in a slow oven for about five hours, when you may examine the fish to ascertain if the

bones have become soft; if not, they must be baked longer, and until such time as all the bones become converted into gristle, when they may be taken up, and, being allowed to remain in the liquor until it becomes cold, the whole must be carefully shifted into a clean dish, so that the fish may not be broken in the transit.

To marinade Conger, Ling, Hake, &c.

To marinade large fish, the backbone should be extracted and the fish cut up in pieces; which, being seasoned as in the foregoing receipt, should be baked until thoroughly done in a tolerably quick oven, and, being permitted to become cold, should be then shifted into a clean dish.

If, however, the tail portions of a conger are done, it will then become necessary to resort to the slow-baking process, for the purpose of dissolving the wiry bones, which will not be so effectually done if the fish is baked quickly.

To collar Eels.

Skin and gut as many eels as you may require; then take out their backbones and cut off their heads; next season them well with cayenne, common pepper, salt, a little grated nutmeg, a few bruised cloves, some sage chopped fine, and a little grated lemon-peel. Roll up the fish in fil-

lets, and bind them round tightly with tape. Boil them in salt-and-water and vinegar, in equal proportions, until they are done. Then take out the fish and throw in some whole peppereorns; east the pickle into a deep dish, and when it becomes quite eold place the fish in it.

Congers, lampreys, garfish, gurnards, and mackerel, may be prepared in the same way; but none of these must be deprived of their skins.

Lobster Salad.

The lobster being boiled, the whole of the flesh should be extraeted from the shell and claws, the tail part being cut or broken in tolerably large pieees, and the whole, with the cream, eoral, and eggs, if any, well mixed up together and put into the bottom of the bowl; the salad and salad mixture being thrown over it.

SECTION XII.

SAUCES FOR FISH.

Lobster Sauce.

Extraet the meat from the shell and elaws, and break it up into small pieces. If you have

a hen lobster, take out all the coral and spawn, and pound it up fine in a mortar. Boil the shells, which should be broken up, in half a pint of water, or, what is still better, the same quantity of veal or some other meat broth, with a little ground allspice or bruised mace, and whole pepper, and a little scraped horse-radish. Let this boil until the whole strength of the ingredients is extracted; then strain off the liquor, and throw it, with the pieces of lobster, into a stewpan, adding to it half a pound of cream, or, if that cannot be conveniently obtained, the same quantity of thick melted butter, a teaspoonful or two of anchovy sauce, or a dissolved anchovy, and a slight squeeze of lemon. Stir the materials about, and let the whole simmer for about five minutes; but be careful not to let it boil; for if you do, it will destroy the colour, which cannot easily be restored. Season with a little cayenne and salt whilst the stewing process is going on; and, when completed, serve up the sauce in boats.

Shrimp Sauce.

Prepare your shrimps as for stewing*, only add a little more liquor, which must be thickened with melted butter or cream. Whilst stewing in the pan, add a teaspoonful or more of anchovy

* See page 224.

sauce, in proportion to the quantity of shrimps ; season with salt, cayenne, and a little bruised mace or allspice. Serve it up in boats.

Crab Sauce.

Pick out a sufficient quantity of the meat of a boiled crab, and mix it up with an equal proportion of its cream ; then, having ready some thin melted butter in a stewpan, throw the mixture into it with about a teaspoonful of anchovy sauce or an anchovy ; thicken with cream or butter coated in flour, and season with cayenne, allspice, and salt. Serve it up in boats.

Oyster Sauce.

In opening the oysters, take care to preserve the liquor ; then, having bearded and taken off the tough portion of the oysters, stew these with the beards in the liquor, to which you may add broth, if you have any, if not, as much water as you will require in proportion to the sauce you intend to make, but at the same time allowing a sufficient quantity for it to diminish to about one-half the original bulk before you put in the oysters. Previous to this, however, the liquor must be taken up and strained, and thickened with a good-sized piece of butter rolled in flour, and to which must be added an anchovy or a tea-

spoonful of anchovy sauce. Then place the oysters in the sauce and keep the whole turning round, to prevent the butter from curdling until thoroughly warmed up; and then serve up in boats.

Cockle Sauce.

Mix up a good-sized piece of butter in plenty of flour, and melt it with some of the liquor from the cockles, a spoonful of anchovy sauce, or a dissolved anchovy, and a little vinegar; then throw in the cockles, which must be previously boiled and extracted from the shells, and shake them about for two or three minutes; and serve them up in boats.

Mussel Sauce.

This is prepared in precisely the same way as the last, only that in the present instance it will be an improvement to substitute white wine for vinegar.

To prepare Anchovies for Sauce.

Take as many anchovies as you are likely to require out of the pickle; dip them into boiling water, and, taking them out instantly, lay them flat upon their sides, and scrape off all the scales and white slime, and with a knife remove whatever portion of intestines they may contain.

Then fill a water-plate with boiling water, and, laying the cleansed anchovies upon it, take out the backbones and mix up all the flesh (which will speedily dissolve with the heat of the plate into a kind of paste) with a little butter and flour. This may afterwards be thrown into and mixed with melted butter.

If you wish for a nice anchovy paste for a sandwich or toast, then mix up the anchovy with the butter only.

Another way.

To two anchovies as above, add one glass of white wine and water, half a nutmeg grated and a little lemon-peel; when it has boiled five or six minutes, strain it off, and add to it a spoonful of white-wine vinegar; then prepare some rich, melted butter, and cast the mixture into it, stirring it well together for about a minute, and serve it up in boats.

Horse-radish Sauce.

Stew an onion to a pulp in good fish or meat gravy; into this grate a teaspoonful of horse-radish; to which add a couple of anchovies, or two teaspoonsful of that sauce and the same quantity of mustard. Let the whole simmer gently over the fire, keeping it stirring all the

time, and thicken it either with cream or butter rolled in flour, and just before you take it up give a slight squeeze of lemon.

Fennel Sauce.

Boil the fennel in the same water in which you do the fish, and, when it becomes tender, take it out, and, chopping it up fine, mix it with plain melted butter.

Egg Sauce.

Boil two or three eggs hard; then strip off the shells; take off the whites and chop them up, but not too fine; afterwards chop up the yolks in like manner; then mix yolk and white well together, and throw both into good melted butter. This sauce is particularly well adapted to all kinds of salt fish, and may be eaten with mustard by those who are partial to the latter article.

Parsley and Butter.

Having chopped the parsley fine, boil it up with the water or broth in which the butter to accompany it is intended to be melted; or, in other words, melt the butter and cook the parsley at the same time; for, as soon as the butter is completely melted, the parsley will be done enough also.

Caper Sauce.

Chop up the capers fine, and throw them into melted butter, and serve it up in boats.

This sauce is not commonly used with fish, but is well adapted for salmon, mackerel, pilchards, eels, and other rich and luscious fish.



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